

SHORT STORY ANALYSIS TO ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM

Short Story-Reading Analysis: A Pedagogical Strategy in Students' Self-esteem Awareness

Clara Inés Quiroga Cabra

Thesis Director: Astrid Núñez Pardo M.A.

Universidad Externado de Colombia

School of Education

Masters' Program in Education with Emphasis on English Didactics

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Note of acceptance

Astrid Núñez Pardo M.A. Thesis Director

María Fernanda Téllez Téllez M.A. Juror

SHORT STORIES TO ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM

For my cherished family

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My foremost expression of gratefulness to God for blessing my enduring professional journey. My gratitude goes to my dearest friend and professor, Astrid Núñez Pardo, whose cheerful attitude and devotion to work inspire teachers' endeavor to succeed. Her dynamic class performance, and her generosity and wise orientation turn out to be a source of creativity and pedagogical innovation. I want to thank María Fernanda Téllez Téllez for her moral support and academic guidance throughout the time of this program; and Judith Castellanos Jaimes, for her valuable contribution in the area of academic writing. I am grateful with all the lecturers who encouraged me to get more involved in the construction of a more respectful and involving society. The support of the Accountancy School students who participated with their valuable insights to my research study is indeed, appreciated. I finally want to thank my cherished family for being on my side, sharing and supporting my professional activities and accomplishments enthusiastically.

Abstract

The current research study aimed at encouraging a group of Public Accountancy students in Universidad Externado de Colombia to recognize personal qualities and increase self-esteem through short story-reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets. The starting point of this qualitative study was to identify students' self-concept, analyze their attitudes in situations in which they had to acknowledge their own positive qualities in contrast with the disposition to highlight their weaknesses and personal errors, and find pedagogical strategies to foster awareness of their strengths and virtues. The instruments used to collect information were audio-recordings, students' artefacts, an exploring self-reflection questionnaire and teacher's field notes. The findings showed that short story content and reflective writing influenced students' role on self-esteem identifying maltreatment as a source of frustration and failure, and reflective writing as a means to construct positive self-concept/self-esteem. Likewise, students achieved awareness of self-esteem, as they recognized personality strengths and accepted their weaknesses confronted in their reflective writing.

Key words: awareness, self-esteem, short story-reading analysis

Resumen

El presente estudio de investigación tuvo como propósito, motivar a un grupo de estudiantes de la Facultad de Contaduría Pública de la Universidad Externado de Colombia, para reconocer sus cualidades personales y elevar su nivel auto-estima a través de unas guías de trabajo centradas en el análisis de historias cortas y en la escritura reflexiva. El punto de partida de este estudio cualitativo consistió en identificar el concepto que los estudiantes tienen de sí mismos, y analizar su actitud en situaciones en las que tuvieron que reconocer sus cualidades positivas, en contraste con la tendencia a destacar sus debilidades y sus errores personales; además, encontrar una estrategia para promover su concienciación acerca de sus fortalezas y sus virtudes. Los instrumentos empleados en la recolección de información fueron: material de grabación de audio, los artefactos de los estudiantes, un cuestionario exploratorio de auto-reflexión y las notas de campo de la profesora. Los hallazgos demostraron que el contenido de las historias cortas y las actividades de escritura reflexiva influyeron en el papel desempeñado por los estudiantes en la construcción de su autoestima, a medida que identificaron el maltrato como fuente de frustración y fracaso como un medio para construir el concepto positivo de sí mismos. Además, alcanzaron un nivel de concienciación de su autoestima mediante el reconocimiento de las fortalezas y la aceptación de las debilidades de su personalidad a través de la escritura reflexiva.

Palabras clave: concienciación, auto-estima, lectura y análisis de historias cortas

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Description

The current research study aimed at encouraging a group of Public Accountancy students in Universidad Externado de Colombia to recognize personal qualities and increase self-esteem through short story-reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets. The starting point of this qualitative study was to identify students' self-concept, analyze their attitudes in situations in which they had to acknowledge their own positive qualities in contrast with the disposition to highlight their weaknesses and personal errors, and find pedagogical strategies to foster awareness of their strengths and virtues. The instruments used to collect information were audio-recordings, students' artefacts, an exploring self-reflection questionnaire and teacher's field notes. The theoretical constructs underpinning this research process were values and self-esteem, short story content, and materials development. Among the authors consulted to widen knowledge about values, self-esteem and attitudes, it is worth mentioning Branden (1995), Cortina (1997), and Guindon (2010). In the matter of short-story reading analysis, Cameron (2001), Erkaya (2005), Porras (2010) and Rossiter (2002) highlighted the importance of associating short-story content with real life experiences and the learning of languages and culture. Concerning Materials Development, the most representative authors consulted were Graves (2000), Nuñez, Tellez and Castellanos (2013), Nuñez, Tellez, Castellanos, and Ramos (2009) and Tomlinson (1998, 2001, 2012), who strengthened theoretical foundations and inspired creativity and suitability of the materials implemented through the pedagogical intervention.

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Content

This research study comprises five chapters. The first one states the research problem, the statement of the problem, research question, general and specific objectives, related studies, setting and rationale. The second focuses on literature review, and the theoretical constructs. The third chapter encompasses the methodological design, research design, methodological approach; type of study, data gathering instruments, instructional design, the pedagogical intervention, the methodological approach, and instructional stages. The fourth chapter addresses data analysis procedure and evidences, data gathering instruments, instructional design, the pedagogical intervention, the methodological approach, and instructional stages. The last chapter considers conclusions, pedagogical implications and limitations, followed by possible research questions for further studies.

Methodology

Bearing in mind the focus of the current study, and its main purpose, the approach selected was qualitative research, which according to Merriam (2009) underlines “understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 5). The participants showed different perceptions through the analysis of the short stories read in class, and associated situations with their own experience. In Richards’s (2003), “the broad aim of qualitative inquiry is to understand better some aspect(s) of the lived world” (p. 10). Besides, Burns (1999) considered that, “the aim of a qualitative approach is to offer descriptions, interpretations and clarifications of naturalistic social contexts” (p. 22). Therefore, students expressed thoughts and feelings that permitted the identification of situations that somehow affected their self-concept or perceptions about themselves. This type of approach demands careful observation of students’ behavior during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention of the study, which is a relevant aspect leading to answer the inquiry. Pondering that the interest in observing the students’ change of attitude throughout the implementation of the worksheets, the suitable study is a case study, which according to Merriam (1988) “can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources” (p. 16). In this particular case, it was feasible to describe students’ reactions toward the content of the stories and the characters’ attitudes to face life challenges. In addition, they were able to deduce the corresponding moral and cultural values to bring into practice in daily life situations.

Conclusions

Short story content and reflective writing influenced students’ role on self-esteem, identifying maltreatment as a factor of frustration and failure. As asserted by Mann, Hosman, Schaalma and de Vries (2004), positive self-esteem leads individuals to succeed, achieve goals, or even manage to face and handle physical disease. Besides, the teacher’s guidance through the materials provided played a significant role throughout the process. Likewise, the students achieved awareness of self-esteem, recognized personality strengths and accepted their weaknesses confronted in their reflective writing.

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Introduction

English teachers are especially interested in adopting updated methodology, and implementing more suitable class materials to reach a higher level of language competence. In spite of teachers' efforts to planning class activities intended to improve students' performance to fulfill their academic accomplishments, some highly qualified teachers disregard children/students' emotional growth. Conversely, a great number of educational institutions and teachers are becoming aware of the importance of considering individual learning styles, and the application of different strategies to facilitate the language acquisition process accompanied by personal growth and self-esteem development. Besides excellent academic results, students have major expectations about being considered as individuals in the classroom where they do not only want to increase their knowledge, but also find moral support, understanding, or at least a smile from their teachers, who can nurture values and virtues evolution through learning processes.

Concerning students, not all of them have reflected on their personal qualities. Therefore, they are not aware of their abilities and strengths, and how successful they can be. Thus, we often hear students' expressions like '*I am not good at...*' '*I'd better quit*' '*I know I will fail*', which are signs of low self-concept/self-esteem. In contrast, Núñez, Téllez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009) stated that teachers must create a "comfortable warm-hearted learning atmosphere in the EFL classroom" (p. 18). Accordingly, I decided to conduct this study to help students recognize their personal qualities and enhance credibility about their potential to achieve their goals, and raise self-esteem through short story-reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets.

This research study comprises five chapters. Chapter I presents the research problem, the statement of the problem, research question, general and specific objectives, related studies, and

setting and rationale. Chapter II focuses on literature review, and the theoretical constructs.

Chapter III encompasses the methodological design, research design, methodological approach; type of study, data gathering instruments, instructional design, the pedagogical intervention, the methodological approach, and instructional stages. Chapter IV addresses data analysis. Finally, chapter V considers conclusions and pedagogical implications.

Chapter I

Research Problem

Statement of the Problem

Throughout my career as a teacher, I observed that those students who learn within an impersonal class atmosphere are not able to build up a positive personal concept. Lack of communication interferes with social interaction. Getting to learn about students' interests and needs is an efficient pedagogical resource to accompany them in their personal growth. Núñez et al. (2009) highlighted the importance of "Carrying out a needs assessment-analysis" considering needs in terms of language level, background, and ability to use the language in and out the class context. In addition, they refer to other needs such as, personal attitudes, and personal learning styles and expectations, among others. Recognizing these needs allows teachers to know students' interests and expectations, as the starting point to decide about what to teach with a suitable methodological approach to motivate learners and enrich their teaching practice. Regarding class atmosphere, open communication leads to peer interaction, and cooperative work, both essential conditions to help students identify their own and their partners' qualities, and their potential abilities to succeed. Thus, besides teaching a language, teachers educate children/students to grow as valuable human beings, above all.

I identified this problem through class observation notes kept in a teacher's reflective journal and archival documents like the English Program Guidelines of the Education School that highlights moral and citizen's values as source of cooperating in the development of an inclusive honest nation. It encourages respect for values, diversity, identity and human rights, and its humanistic philosophy with the commitment to educate and research on social sciences.

On this basis, I proposed the design and implementation of four short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets, allowing students to perceive and consider human favorable and adverse situations and attitudes to help them recognize their own personal qualities and values to increase their self-knowledge and enhance self-esteem. Consequently, I deemed appropriate to pose the subsequent research question.

Research Question

How do short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets enhance Public Accountancy students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom?

Research Objectives

In an attempt to answer the inquiry, it was paramount to state general and specific objectives.

General objective: To explore the contribution of short story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets to the enhancement of students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom.

Specific Objectives: (a) To describe the value of short stories in raising students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom; (b) to identify the effect of reading analysis and writing worksheets on students' self-concept. (c) To assess the evolution of students' opinion about themselves (personal qualities and self-esteem) throughout the implementation of short story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets.

Related Studies

Due to the general concern for strengthening students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem, teaching values and building up more comprehensive attitudes, it is worth

mentioning related research studies accomplished to provide better human relationships and personal growth in local and regional contexts.

In view of values, a qualitative action research study carried out by Rentería and Quintero (2009) aimed at designing a strategy to enhance coexistence at all levels, within a vulnerable school community affected by the negative impact of paramilitary, guerilla, political corruption forces, in addition to drug consumption, delinquency, urban crime, home violence, and illiteracy. The researchers understood the term ‘strategy’ in the sense of a series of institutional rules to make assertive decisions to accomplish a goal, in opposition to the military strategies focused on destroying the enemy. The instruments used to collect data were a questionnaire, teacher’s field notes, and students’ artefacts. The findings suggest that involving all the school personnel, with no exception, has a commitment to support students and prevent them from hazardous situations both at school and at home. This study is relevant to the current one as it foments the values of respect and coexistence to recognize others’ personal qualities and self-esteem.

Despite the difference in origin and age of participants, there is a common feature with the prior study, in the point of vulnerability of population participating in a qualitative action study conducted by Losada and Villegas (2015), in Florencia, Caquetá. The researchers proposed some didactic strategies involving cooperative games, short stories and music to teach values dealing with obedience, solidarity and respect to improve school coexistence in preschool children, whose aggressive attitudes interfere with partners’ understanding and mutual support in the classroom. After collecting data through close class observation and teachers’ journal during the time of the implementation, they concluded that ludic activities involved children and allowed them to understand their partners’ needs, and increase solidarity and respect. The importance of

this study relies on the fact that it converges with my concern about increasing students' awareness of self-concept, respect and solidarity, as basic grounds for personal qualities and self-esteem.

There is an additional qualitative case study connecting with self-esteem, which is the essential value to broaden through the analysis of short story contents. García (2002) accomplished a research study proposing arts to decrease low esteem allowing learners to express feelings and release their worries, and demonstrate their artistic abilities. The researcher implemented art workshops, using color space and texture as tools to let children express their feelings to build up confidence, self-esteem, love for the family and for people around. Students' artefacts, interviews, questionnaires, and teacher's field notes journal were the data gathering instruments. The results demonstrate that workshops based on motivating topics fostered creativity and artistic expressions, and helped students reflect on attitudes to control aggression, egoism, inhibition and poor social relationships. This study is meaningful to the present one because it associates with expressing feelings for others and building self-assurance and self-concept.

Likewise, Oliveros and Gómez (2015) performed a qualitative research study to determine the weight of low self-esteem on first grade students' learning success. In addition to close observation, and an interview, the main instrument was the questionnaire, which provided significant information to identify the cause of children's low self-esteem. The findings showed that boys and girls attending this school spend long hours out of home because their parents are not able to accompany them. Moreover, as consequence of physical and psychological mistreatment, they do not feel appreciated; thus, they are reluctant to attend classes, to do

homework and interact with other children in the classroom. The researchers recommended to start working in association with parents, assign some basic responsibilities to children to assist the teacher in class to let them feel important, to plan and perform recreational activities to engage and motivate them to interact with the group, and foster cooperative work to improve their learning process, and therefore, their self-esteem. I found this study pertinent as it promotes group work and peer interaction to apply during the implementation of the short story reading analysis and writing worksheets.

In relation to teachers' influence on students' personal and academic performance, Sarmiento and Sanabria's (2003) case study highlights the need of affection in the class atmosphere, and the effect of attitudes and methodologies to increase students' self-esteem and motivation through both students and teachers' self-assessment process. The instruments employed to collect data were a preliminary questionnaire to find out students' attitude toward the EFL class; an interview to complement the questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, to measure the students' initial level of self-esteem; video-recordings, and a teachers' personal diary, to keep impressions about students' class attitudes. The findings allowed the researchers to observe students' motivation through gratifying didactic materials that fostered their interaction to express themselves, in contrast with demotivation, when teachers disregarded what they did. Moreover, teachers' positive self-concept and support created a respectful atmosphere, while rude gestures and expressions lowered motivation, as result of close connection between teachers' attitudes and students' self-esteem through the language learning process. This study illustrates the development of appealing didactic materials to increase students' interaction and motivation to create a reflective learning setting, paramount to the pedagogical intervention of my study.

Due to the relevance of short stories as an underlying construct of the current study, I deemed pertinent to cite Saavedra and Saldarriaga (2010), whose research study aimed at demonstrating that the Program “Children Tales” increased the level of self-esteem in boys and girls aged 5 years, in a private school in Trujillo, Perú. The researchers used pre and post-test, a test production of stories, and an observation guide to collect data. Prior to the implementation phase, the researchers identified the level of children’s self-esteem through a pre-test conducted with the participants. The procedure included planning and proper selection of tales, and dramatized performance involving proper gestures to foster children’s participation. The analysis of values and anti-values deduced through comprehension questions, reasoning and feeling perception, followed by vocabulary exploration and symbolic words understanding enhanced imagination and creativity. Consequently, boys and girls showed high level of self-esteem, from 43.1 to start the process, to 48.3, after the implementation of “Children Tale” program, in comparison to the level observed in the pre-test. The cited study has direct connection with my study as it shares the interest in comprehension questions and reflective activities to deduce values and anti-values, which are essential aspects to consider in the development of the short-story reading analysis and writing worksheets of this study.

Regardless age and level of education of participants, the qualitative research study implemented by De Mello, Arumugam, Jing and Mohd (2015) showed that 7 year-children understood values and anti-values through characters’ attitudes. The researchers used observations, semi-structured interviews, and teachers’ field notes to collect information, and concluded that values allowed children to increase their self-esteem. Furthermore, these stories helped them decide what to imitate to make their living worthy. Besides, children felt motivated

to continuing learning English by listening to short stories. Cooper, Baumgartner & Buchanan, considered that moral stories are instruments to build children's moral development, and a tool to express mutual compassion and empathy, (as cited in De Melo et al. 2015). Regarding the purpose of my study, I intend to promote a conscious gradual analysis of short-story content included in the worksheets, going beyond mere language skills, to foster values through narrative stories to educate valuable sensitive citizens, able to learn the art of living to interact in challenging contexts.

Setting and Rationale

Setting

This research, accomplished in a private university in Bogotá, Colombia, with a group of Public Accountancy students, who attended an English as a Foreign Language class for general and specific purposes, aimed at implementing short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets to enhance their awareness of personal self-esteem, within the EFL learning process. Despite having a text book, especially designed for the career, it was necessary to develop side short-story materials to analyze content and do reflective writing aimed at attaining the purpose of the study abovementioned. The English program offered six 96-hour English levels to groups of 15 to 20 students from several academic programs. The institutional mission is to grow citizens that cooperate to the development of a more inclusive society and reconstruct the dignity of the nation. It encourages respect for values, diversity, identity and human rights, and its humanistic philosophy with the commitment to educate and research on social sciences.

Rationale

Bearing in mind that lack of self-esteem and misconception of values are common issues of discussion at all levels, and due to parents, teachers, religious leaders, the government, and adults' concern about young people's behavior, it is worth mentioning the way to face the challenge of bringing children/youngsters up in terms of values. On the one hand, elder people expect educational institutions to do their best to heighten personal and professional values. On the other hand, educators complain about parents and students' poor commitment in what implies cooperation and responsibility in the construction of moral and professional principles.

I expect this study to increase students' interaction and motivation via group work and peer interaction to create a reflective learning setting, which favors the implementation of short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets that aim to help students deduce values of respect, solidarity and coexistence to recognize their personal qualities and raise their awareness of self-esteem.

My study also offered me an opportunity to improve my discipline knowledge and pedagogical practice, as I incorporated theories and critically examined information to develop the proposed materials for the pedagogical intervention of this study. I strongly agree with Núñez and Téllez (2009), about their perception of teachers' permanent reflection and assessment of their EFL activities, as part of professional growth and class enhancement; and with Núñez, Ramos and Téllez (2006), who consider teachers' reflection as an instrument of self-recognition leading to innovation and teaching permanent progress. Accordingly, my research study may offer an innovative proposal local EFL teachers interested in exploring short story reading

analysis, and writing worksheets to the enhancement of students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem, which implies teacher's creativity and effort.

Finally, this study is relevant to the Research Line on Materials Development, ascribed to the research group Critical Pedagogies and Didactics for Social Transformation, as it advocates the design of worksheets focused on short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets for heightening students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem.

Furthermore, according to Nuñez and Tellez (2015), teachers' reflections and commitment to create their own materials increase their personal and professional growth. Teachers who have the ability to reflect on their own teaching process foster their own teaching activity and enrich colleagues around them, and contribute with academic programs in which they are involved.

The second chapter of this study portrays explicit information about the theoretical construct underlying the current research study.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter presents fundamental theoretical aspects about values and self-esteem, short story content, and materials development, underpinning this research process. When thinking about the constructs of a study, it is essential to understand concepts and implications. The first concept to consider connects to values and self-esteem.

Values

On this subject, Cortina (1997) wondered if people have a clear idea of the term ‘value’, and what it conveys; or perhaps they refer to the topic without having enough information about it. Although she asserted that there is not an accurate definition, she conceived values as qualities that transform the world into an inhabitable place. Values occur when individuals appreciate them through attitudes, generally expressed by using nouns, such as freedom, solidarity, balance, justice; and adjectives like useful, or harmful, just to mention some. Depending on social and cultural contexts, values differ; thus, there can be positive or negative (anti-values).

Acknowledging that values are favorable conditions to build up a better class atmosphere ruled by freedom, justice, and loyalty, teachers should foster evaluation strategies aimed at appreciating beauty, elegance and harmony, instead of drawing attention to misspelling of words, crossing out grammar mistakes, or scratching inaccurate use of verb tense. Positive conditions like solidarity, dialogue and willingness to solve problems are the foundations of motivation and progress, not only in a classroom, but also in any other context where individuals interact.

Type of values. There is a wide range of values. Scheler (as cited in Cortina, 1997) stated different types of values. Sensitive values, which include joy versus pain, happiness versus

sorrow; values associate to society: useful versus harmful; cultural and spiritual, which include a variety of values: aesthetic, beautiful versus ugly; ethical and juridical, fear versus unfear, speculative, true versus fake or false. Finally, religious values: sacred versus profane. As observed, these values can be positive or negative, depending on attitudes and perceptions, as mentioned above.

The concept of ‘values’ is taught through education. Cortina (1997) asserted that there is not neutral education. In addition to acquire knowledge, students attend school to grow as individuals with the aim of becoming better citizens. Values like citizenship, self-esteem, tolerance, prudence, well-being, and happiness make teachers and students aware of how valuable they are, and how much they can do to fulfill everyone’s expectations and reach their personal goals.

The scholar presented a contrast between Ortega y Gasset, who considered good, justice and loyalty as moral values; and Scheler, who referred to moral adequate attitudes, rather than moral values. Both express these issues in a different way. However, when people have honest attitudes, in the end, they respect moral values. Having in mind that, human beings are social active agents within a community, there must be a permanent reflection on personal qualities and attitudes to build up self-concept /self-esteem.

Self-esteem. Considering the purpose of the current study, it is required to highlight self-esteem as the core of this study. In comparison to the concept of values, there is not a unique universal definition of this term. However, Guindon (2010) affirmed that self-esteem, as a construct, is perceptible through artefacts, and cited Cooley, referring to the “looking-glass self,” connected to people’s perceptions about individuals; and, James (1890) considering self-esteem

“as self-appreciation consisting of feelings and emotions toward the self”. Both perceived self-esteem as affective. Mead (1934) added the concept of self as the outcome of “interactions, in which individuals experience themselves as reflected in the behaviour of others” (p. 29) and incorporates the concept of self-evaluation in relation to self. Furthermore, Wells and Marwell (as cited in Guindon, 2010) classified self-esteem from four different approaches: “object/attitudinal approach, relational approach, psychological responses approach, and personality function/component approach” (p. 28). The first considers personal reactions and feelings about objects; the second focuses on the relations of a series of attitudes and reactions, while the third has to do with positive or negative reactions about our attitudes or personal physical aspects. The last approach connects to our personality, and affects motivation and self-discipline. These conceptions demonstrate that individuals perceive themselves by interacting with others within different contexts.

Quite a number of people usually mention the term ‘self-esteem’, although not everybody has reached a consensus on it. Nevertheless, Mann, Hosman, Schaalma and de Vries (2004) asserted that positive self-esteem leads individuals to succeed, achieve goals, or even manage to face and handle physical disease. In contrast, low self-esteem can turn into serious mental and physical disorders; moreover, social problems and negative endanger conducts. Furthermore, positive self-esteem influences academic success. In addition, it protects human beings from physical illness. To this regard, Broers, Hengelveld, Kaptein, Le-Cessie, Van de Loo, and de Vries, argued the positive impact of high self-esteem on people going through a surgery process. (As cited in Mann et al. (2004). In fact, people with high level of credibility increase self-confidence and somehow influence surgeons’ performance, as they perceive patients’ feelings.

Personal awareness of abilities, virtues, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses are the foundation to build up self-esteem, and are part of self-concept. In Branden's words, "Self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It is confidence in the efficacy of our mind, in our ability to think" (p. 46), as cited in Campo and Martínez (2009). The scholar pondered self-esteem particularly linked to success and happiness, as a result of individual's self-confidence built up over life stages; and the fact of feeling happy about being a certain kind of person leads everyone to face daily challenges and explore unknown fields as well. In addition, Branden (1995) suggested six pillars to build self-esteem, capitalizing and emphasizing on the word 'Practice' of Living Consciously, Practice of Self-Acceptance, Practice of Self-Responsibility, Practice of Self-Assertiveness, Practice of Living Purposefully, and Practice of Personal Integrity. Hence, self-esteem is not only the personal concept individuals have about themselves or personal behavior, but the outcome of life experiences. And, as underlined by the author, understanding the word 'practice' as something real to work on constantly, and constructed on the foundation of love and affection, guidance and living patterns provided by people's involvement throughout the process of each one's personal growth, and self-confidence.

On the contrary, a negative self-concept definitely interferes with success when facing challenges. Needless to say, that a positive self-concept is not enough to reach goals and fulfil expectations. Therefore, depending on how positive or negative self-concept is, attitude toward daily life experience may also be positive or not. Effort and persistence are required to carry out a significant and productive personal life project.

Under these conditions, a person is able to face challenges successfully by using personal resources when going through critical situations during his/her life. As a contrast, people with low self-esteem not only feel unable to fulfill their expectations and reach their goals, but also to have good interpersonal relationships. Self-confidence is the foundation of high self-esteem.

In Brown's (2006) words, "no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and self – efficacy belief in your own capabilities to successfully perform that activity" (p. 141). Accordingly, a basic condition to perform a cognitive activity is to have the perception and appreciation of personal abilities and mental conditions. Regarding affective activities, motivation is the pillar of success, since human beings need an incentive to increase self-concept and confidence, and become willing to do a proper work and accomplish their goals.

In short, a person who has a positive self-concept is able to identify his/her values, strengths and weaknesses, accept the possibility to reach his/her goals, recognize and enjoy others' success, and state his/her personal view within a group, and make assertive decisions.

Accordingly, I intend students to identify significant aspects of human behavior to appreciate values through different attitudes, and become aware of the importance of adopting a favorable position about life circumstances to increase self-esteem and grow at personal and professional levels, through the analysis of short stories content, which is the next construct of this study.

Short Stories

Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines 'short story' as "an invented story which is no more than about 10.000 words in length" (p. 1162). Regarding length, Bowen

associated short story with ‘shortness’ or ‘non-extension’ (as cited in Hunter, 2007, p. 1) referring to the positive aspect of this genre. The latter finds short story as consequence of modernity and states: “Short-story form is somehow specially amenable or adaptable to the representation of an increasingly fragmented social character under the conditions of technological, industrial modernity” (p. 2). In the same vein, Abrams (1970) defined a short story as “a narrative that can be read at one sitting of one and a half hour to two hours, and that is limited to, a certain unique or single effect, to which every detail is subordinate” (p. 158). The authors highlighted the role of short story in literature curricula during the twentieth century, in which shortness is without question, a sign of shortness in people’s lives.

Concerning short-story genre, Erkaya (2005) considered it as a fundamental pedagogical source to increase and assure knowledge, and to develop the four language skills, due to the advantages provided through the topics taught in an EFL class.

With respect to the use of stories, Rossiter (2002) contended that, “Stories are effective as educational tools because they are believable, rememberable, and entertaining” (p. 1). Moreover, Porras (2010) remarked on surrounding learners with “a lot of meaningful, interesting and comprehensible input [given by short stories] to help them grow in the learning process” (p. 106). Short stories, in Cameron’s (2001) words, “offer a whole imaginary world, created by language that children can enter and enjoy, learning languages as they go” (p. 159). EFL teachers have a serious commitment to meet students’ needs and interest to increase motivation toward literature, culture, as part of the language learning process; hence, short stories are appropriate pedagogical resources that engage students in the learning process since they boost imagination, foster construction of meaning, promote class participation, and enhance their language skills.

One way to engage students in the EFL class is through the inclusion of their self-selected topics in materials designed by their teacher. Thus, the next construct adheres Materials Development, (MD henceforth) since the short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets proposed as the pedagogical intervention underpinning this study intend to raise students' awareness of self-esteem. The following excerpts encompass some theoretical aspects dealing with the field of materials to increase both teacher's creativity and professional growth.

Materials Development

When undertaking Materials Development (MD henceforth), teachers make a careful selection of topics, approach, and strategies, stating general and specific goals to achieve. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the view of some wide experienced scholars. To start, Tomlinson (1998) declared that materials development is "anything which is done by writers or teachers to provide sources of language input and to exploit these sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake" (p. 2). In Graves's (2000) insight, "Materials development is the planning process by which a teacher creates units and lessons within those units to carry out the objectives of the course. In a sense, it is the process of making your syllabus more and more specific" (p. 149). These scholars coincide in considering materials development as an instrument to accomplish learning goals and enlarge knowledge.

MD is a process in which EFL teachers plan and design learning activities to facilitate the achievement of learning goals. MD, as sustained by Núñez et al. (2009), "implies the combination of both reasoning and artistic processes" (p. 16). On this matter, Tomlinson (2011) declared that it "is both a field of study and a practical undertaking", and Núñez, Téllez and Castellanos (2013), claimed that it "demands an informed methodology that allows validating the

efficiency, appropriateness and relevance of materials within the context of learning a language” (p. 10). Finally, Núñez and Téllez (2015) added that it “focused on the effect of materials on the teaching-learning process of a foreign language” (p. 57). As a result, MD entails cognizant and imaginative procedures supported by a knowledgeable methodology to ensure suitable, useful and pertinent materials within the socio-cultural contexts where the language teaching and learning process occurs.

Materials. Materials have an array of definitions: as tools, elements, artefacts, resources and product. Materials, as defined by Gray (2013), “Are cultural artefacts from which meanings emerge about the language being taught, associating it with particular ways of being, particular varieties of language and ways of using language, and particular sets of values” (p. 3). In the same line of thought, Núñez et al. (2013) conceptualized them as “socio-cultural resources that facilitate not only linguistic interaction but also cultural exchanges between the various human groups ... they are forms of social mediation that allow flow of knowledge” (p. 10). Similarly, for Montijano (2014), they are “elements that bring about a colossal source of practical ideas on how to sequence the different linguistic constituents to teach” (p. 268). Finally, Xiaotang (2004) contended that “materials are not just tools; they represent the aims, values, and methods in teaching a foreign language. Materials are the most powerful device in spreading new methodological ideas and in shaping language teaching and learning practice” (p. 1). Whatever the nature of materials, they are a source of language, culture values, ideologies, meaning and uses to mediate interactions among human beings in a diversity of contexts.

Types of materials. Language teaching and learning materials provide a variety of perspectives. In fact, Tomlinson (2012) envisioned five categories: “informative... instructional

...experiential ...eliciting ...and exploratory” (p. 143), which correspondingly inform about the target language, allow for language practice, let learners live the language, permit them to use the language, and foster language discoveries. The author further classified them as “linguistic, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic” (Tomlinson (2001 p. 66). Alternatively, Mayora (2013) arranged them by purpose (authentic, non-authentic), by format (Paper-based, audiovisual, electronic), and by creator (in house-commercial). Lastly, for Tomlinson (2012), materials may be “coursebooks, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile phone interactions, though, inevitably, much of the literature focuses on printed materials” (p. 143). At a more particular class context, materials may be learning class activities, exercises, or tasks; and lessons, didactic units, workshops, worksheets, or modules, which meet the contextual needs of users (Núñez & Téllez, 2015; Nuñez & Téllez, 2009; Núñez et al. 2009). The materials proposed for the pedagogical intervention of this study fall into the category of visual, auditory, non-authentic paper-based experiential and eliciting as they include learning and reflective activities that let learner use the language to interpret, analyze short-story content, and express their self-perception through writing in the worksheets designed by the teacher. After analyzing my personal experience and by studying basic principles of methodology, I realized that I was on the right track to designing my own materials for teaching values and habits.

Theoretical framework for MD. They help teachers structure their own materials. On the one hand, Núñez, Pineda and Téllez, (2004), affirmed that “it is by combining their [teachers’] theoretical background and their teaching experience in the development of materials that they create positive conditions for language learning” (p. 131). In the same spirit, Núñez et al. (2009) suggested an MD Scaffolding to assure quality materials that entails several stages: analyze and assess students’ needs decide on the approach and design, state general goals and

objectives of the course, design the syllabus, develop materials, and revise and assess, pilot and adjust the materials. Since learning is a dynamic, changeable process due to the nature of students and the evolution of life circumstances, the abovementioned stages allow teachers and students to maximize learning through up dated effective materials.

On the other hand, reflection plays a key role in developing materials. On this subject, Núñez, Téllez and Castellanos (2017a) contended that “It [the MD framework] ... promotes reflection regarding both what they know about their particular teaching contexts and what they know about language, learning, and teaching” (pp. 23-24). Reflection on students’ socio-cultural realities, theoretical foundations of MD and knowledge of the nature of language and the vision of learning is central to create materials that foment constructive learning environment.

Short-story reading and writing worksheets. The content of the short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets, allowed students to read and make sense of them in relation to sensitive (joy- pain, happiness-sorrow) and cultural and spiritual values (aesthetic as beauty-ugliness), as they contribute to the building of self-concept. With reference to worksheets, Ur (1996) stated that they are “Good teacher-made materials [which] are arguably the best there are: relevant and personalized, answering the needs of the learners in a way no other materials can” (p. 191). Likewise, in Lee’s (2014) words “worksheets are able to ...to lead students’ attentions and give students opportunities to work independently” (p. 96). Hence, this study is supported by “Teacher-made worksheets” (Ur, 1996, p. 192), aligned to the English program syllabus, and consisted of sequenced learning activities dealing with expressions that convey negative attitudes opposed expressions meaning cheerful ideas to adopt positive attitudes. Finally, reading comprehension and analysis questions, control writing, and reflective writing aimed at identifying cause and effects of failure as the onset for self-esteem.

Chapter III, presented below, offers a description of the Methodological design, which encompasses both the research and the instructional designs.

Chapter III

Methodological Design

In this chapter, I present the research and the instructional designs that inform the current study.

Research Design

This section addresses the research approach, the type of study, the participants and the data-gathering instruments.

Qualitative Research

On basis of the focus of the current study, and bearing in mind its main purpose, I selected the qualitative research, which according to Merriam (2009) underlines “understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 5). The participants showed different perceptions through the analysis of the short stories read in class, and associated situations with their own experience.

Research approach. Allied with the type of research, the approach underlying this study was the qualitative research approach. In Richards’s (2003), “the broad aim of qualitative inquiry is to understand better some aspect(s) of the lived world” (p. 10). Besides, Burns (1999) considered that, “the aim of a qualitative approach is to offer descriptions, interpretations and clarifications of naturalistic social contexts” (p. 22). Therefore, students expressed thoughts and feelings that permitted the identification of situations that somehow affected their self-concept or perceptions about themselves. This type of approach demands careful observation of students’ behavior during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention of the study, which is a relevant aspect leading to answer the inquiry.

Type of study. Pondering that the interest in observing the students’ change of attitude throughout the implementation of the worksheets, the suitable study is a case study, which

according to Merriam (1988) “can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources” (p. 16). In this particular case, it was feasible to describe students’ reactions toward the content of the stories and the characters’ attitudes to face life challenges. In addition, they were able to deduce the corresponding moral and cultural values to bring into practice in daily life situations.

Participants. The participants of this research study were the students, and the teacher-researcher and materials designer.

Students. Ten students in a group of English 4 consisted of male and female students whose academic field was Public Accountancy, who had taken three semesters of EGP and ESP, volunteered to participate developing reading strategies through short stories drawn to personal reflection about topics to convey self-esteem relevance.

Teacher-researcher and materials designer. In this study, I performed three roles: during the inquiry process, I turned out to be part of the context under study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). As a text developer, I designed short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets considering that developing materials is an exemption of being a teacher (Graves, 1997; Núñez et al. 2004; Núñez & Téllez, 2009; Núñez et al. 2009; and Tomlinson, 1988). In my daily teaching practice, I planned the lessons, selected and implemented the methodology and learning strategies (Harmer, 2007), and implemented the pedagogical intervention that support this study.

Instruments for data collection. Three instruments allowed gathering information: audio-recordings, students' artefacts, an exploring self-reflection questionnaire and teacher's field notes.

Audio-recordings. This instrument is a useful tool due to its practicality for listening to students' insights several times. Burns (1999) defined them as "a technique for capturing in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances. Used in the classroom, they are, thus, very valuable sources of accurate information on patterns of interactional behavior which may not be obvious during the actual teaching process" (p. 94). Indeed, the students expressed their ideas spontaneously when interacting with their partners and the teacher. (See Appendix C)

Students' artefacts. They are "products people use, objects people make, and records of what they do, say, produce, or write" (Le Compte & Preissle, 1994, p. 1). Materials used as evidence to document and record personal information of the society, people or a culture (Given, 2008). "Physical "props" people use to get things done within the contexts of their daily life" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 235); or "samples of texts over a period of time [that] enables teachers to assess the progress which students make" (Burns, 1999, p. 140). They served the purpose of evincing students' progress in short-story content analysis and reflective writing intended for the construction of their self-concept.

Questionnaire. To start the process, I administered a questionnaire aimed to measure the students' self-esteem level, adapting questions inspired on Rosenberg's (1965) Scale. Based on the outcome of this instrument, we performed a group self-assessment process to discuss and share different points of view.

Questionnaire yielded students' perceptions and concepts about self-attitudes and values built throughout life experience regarding success and failure, which emerged during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention. As mentioned by Núñez et al. (2017), a questionnaire gathers data on participants' "opinions, feelings and ideas in regard[s] to various aspects" (p. 31). This was a significant instrument for this study because it glimpsed students' perceptions of the materials implemented and the procedures of the implementation. (See Appendix A)

Teacher's field notes. It is a useful instrument due to its practicality and reliability in the registration of constant observation and variations of behaviors (Hopkins, 1995), generated by the implementation of short-story analysis and reflective writing to build self-esteem. As a researcher, I wrote the field notes right at the end of the implementation of each worksheet. (See Appendix B)

Instructional Design

In this fragment, I described the pedagogical intervention, established its general and specific objectives, defined the intervention as innovation, identified the vision of the nature of language and the vision of language learning, elaborated on the language teaching methodology, made the connection between the pedagogical intervention and the research inquiry, and portrayed the instructional phases.

Pedagogical intervention. It consisted of developing and implementing four short story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets to enhance students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom. To do so, I adopted the scaffolding process proposed by Núñez et al. (2009), mentioned in the MD construct, and complemented in Núñez et

al. (2017a), in which “reflection on ... particular learning contexts, ... knowledge of language, learning and language learning and teaching” (p. 28) is required. In addition to this, the authors (2017a) argued that an MD framework plays a central role in: “Assisting teachers in analysing needs for contextualized materials, aiding teachers in developing innovative materials for their pedagogical intervention and augmenting teachers’ reflection on teaching-learning theories” (p. 34). Thereafter, scaffolding or structuring the design of materials assures the effectiveness, presentation, content and level of complexity of the learning activities proposed.

To do so the students performed six reading analysis activities, by making content reflections about feasible positive changes in their personal life, writing a new constructive version of the stories, and writing some comments containing their impressions about each class experience. They had the chance to share and exchange their views about the contents of the reading analysis. Among the topics addressed in the stories, it is worth mentioning, building up or destroying self-concept, making dreams come true, making assertive decisions, discovering hidden values; all of them providing life lessons to bring into practice to realize self-values projected to further personal growth that might eventually be mirrored in their professional development.

General and specific objectives. (a) To generate a positive class atmosphere to focus students’ interest in the recognition and construction of values; (b) to sensitize students about the concept of values; (c) to encourage students to reflect on people’s values regarding the members of the group; (d) to guide students’ reading analysis and writing reflection on their self-concept; and (e) to raise students’ awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom.

Intervention as innovation. Innovating in the EFL classroom implies transforming ordinary learning strategies and process. While Rogers (as cited in Kirklan & Sutch, 2009) emphasized on innovation as "the application of a new resource or approach that changes social practice" (p. 10). Similarly, Rudduck (1991) referred it as "conscious, planned and involves some fundamental breaks with the known past" (p. 56). Markee (2001); Rudduck (1991); Willis & Willis (1996); and Wedell (2009), remarked on changing old habits considering the individuals and their context. According to Núñez, Téllez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009), innovation helps students fulfil their learning expectations and let teachers be more creative and productive. Finally, Hannan and Silver (2001), pointed out improving, solving or easing a given problem. Thence, an innovation implies proposing transformation of teaching contexts, undergoing the academic and practical activity of developing four short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets, encouraging students' permanent self-reflection on their values and personal qualities; and considering others' attributes.

The vision of the nature of language and the vision of language learning. Four visions of the nature of language underpin this pedagogical intervention: The linguistic, functional, self-expression and culture, and ideology (Tudor, 2001). The first two visions associate with the linguistic components required to convey meaning both in oral and written communication. The third connects to the students' ability to express thoughts and feelings regarding their self and self-concept; and the fourth relates to student's socio-cultural background where attitudes and values emerged are constantly nurtured.

In reference to the vision of language learning, I opted for the experiential and analytical learning, and the role of affect in learning. (Tudor, 2001). Throughout the reading analysis

process, students related the content of the selected short stories to their own personal feelings and experience to improve their self-esteem. They also appreciated the role of affect in the content of the reading considering the characters' concluding response and reactions.

Language teaching methodology informing the pedagogical intervention. The selected language teaching and learning methodology is Student-centered instruction (SCI henceforth). It is an approach determined by the students influence on content, learning activities, materials designed and used, and the learning rhythm, leading to learning from one another (Collins & O'Brien, 2003). According to the authors, this approach encompasses open-ended question that requires creative and reflective thinking to recreate short stories by resetting negative thoughts and attitudes. Besides placing the students at the center of the EFL processes, SCI boosts learning motivation, making better sense and assuming more positive attitude with respect to the content proposed.

Instructional phases. Three phases constitute the implementation of the pedagogical intervention as follows: Informed consent, sensitization, and implementation of the materials.

Informed consent. I informed students about the purpose and methodology of the current study and encouraged them to become part of it. I also provided explicative answers to clarify students' inquiries and doubts regarding the study. Finally, I provided the form for them to sign accepting as participants and remarked on the confidentiality of the information gathered. (See Appendix D)

Sensitization. I let students know the pedagogical intervention of this study, its objectives and the details of timing, as well as the implementation of the short story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets. In addition, I mentioned the importance of interacting

among them to exchange their views and perceptions about the factors to improve their level of self-esteem.

Implementation of the materials. The time allotted for each of the worksheet was two class sessions of two hours each that totals 16 hours. As noticed in the sample worksheet the proposed eliciting, reading comprehension and reflective writing engaged students in group-interaction; and, as suggested by Tomlinson (2003), cognitive and emotional engagement. The sequence of the worksheets, supported with the guidance of the teacher, made students realize their view about the way to manage negative expressions leading to failure in contrast with positive ones leading to success. Afterwards, students performed in-class reading comprehension activities, analyzed content, and reflected on feasible positive changes in their personal life. Students also wrote some comments containing their impressions about each class experience. Besides, they had the chance to share and exchange their views about the contents of the reading materials. There were not constraints for the implementation of this pedagogical intervention as the classroom was equipped with the required physical, technological, and above all, human resources to carry out the activities proposed in the worksheets.

The activities presented in the worksheets centered on short story content analysis and reflective writing aimed at recognizing values and enhancing students' self-esteem.

Activity schedule. The table below comprises the sequence of short stories and class activities I developed for students to analyze the content under the reflection on values, which was guided through student-students and teacher-student interactions with questions relate to the content, and associated with real life experiences both at personal and academic level.

SHORT STORIES TO ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM

Activity	Topic
Preliminary Worksheet	Identifying and defining vocabulary dealing with attitudes/value
Worksheet 1	Are you all right? Describe your personality
Worksheet 2	Building up or destroying self-concept.
Worksheet 3	Contrasting characters' attitudes
Worksheet 4	Understanding a disability
Supplementary Activity 1	Telling about great things
Supplementary Activity 2	Writing a professional profile

Sample of the Worksheets

Preliminary Worksheet

Warm Up

1. Previous questions. Discuss your answers with your classmates.

- What are values?
- How do you identify values?
- What kind of values can you mention?
- What are attitudes?
- How can people express attitudes?

2. To have a better world, it is mandatory to start by recognizing our attitudes. In the puzzle below, find words (→ or ↓) dealings with attitudes. Share your word list, and discuss meaning. Bold letters represent the initial of a word. You may find nouns, adjectives and verbs.

General objective: Identify words representing positive or negative attitudes.

Specific objectives: (a) To understand the meaning of words and share; and (b) to compare and discuss concepts with your partners.

H	O	S	T	I	L	I	T	Y	F	I	G	H	T	F	A	I	T	H	I
B	G	E	N	E	R	O	U	S	A	E	O	T	O	L	E	R	A	N	T
S	E	R	E	N	I	T	Y	Z	I	K	A	S	L	O	V	I	N	G	C
E	P	E	A	V	Q	P	U	F	R	I	E	N	D	L	I	N	E	S	S
C	E	N	C	Y	L	A	Z	Y	N	S	H	A	R	I	N	G	G	I	H
U	A	I	J	U	S	T	I	C	E	H	O	L	U	C	K	Y	U	N	A
R	C	T	A	S	P	I	T	Y	S	Y	N	T	N	I	C	E	I	C	M
I	E	Y	L	O	N	E	L	Y	S	P	E	A	C	E	F	U	L	E	E
T	B	O	R	E	D	N	E	L	O	U	S	R	E	A	S	Z	T	R	E
Y	A	C	C	E	P	T	A	N	C	E	T	T	R	I	C	K	Y	E	S

3. After clarifying the meaning of words, discuss how these attitudes may have a positive or negative impact on people's daily life.

Worksheet No. 1

Building up our self-concept



General objective

To be able to identify aspects in students' attitudes towards life situations so that they can build their self-concept.

Specific objectives

- To recognize general and specific information in a short story dealing with people's attitudes and feelings.
- To recreate a short story aimed at building cheerfulness and self-confidence by following a model.

Illustration: Consuelo García Quiroga

Lesson 1:

Are you all right?

General objective: To identify expressions conveying values, positive or negative self-concept.

Specific objectives: (a) to understand the implications of using recurrent negative or positive expressions; (b) to analyze the influence of such expressions on students' success or failure; (c) to reflect and change their mind about the impact of word use.

Learning strategy:
contrasting key expressions.

Illustration: Consuelo García

How do you think we feel?

1. Are the expressions abovementioned familiar to you?

a. all of them ____ b. above 10 ____ c. below 5 ____

2. Which ones do you often use? Write the numbers.

____ / ____ / ____ / ____

3. Go to the next page. Substitute the numbers representing prior negative attitudes, for contrasting encouraging ones by matching them with ideas from the subsequent illustration.

Take off! Fly high!

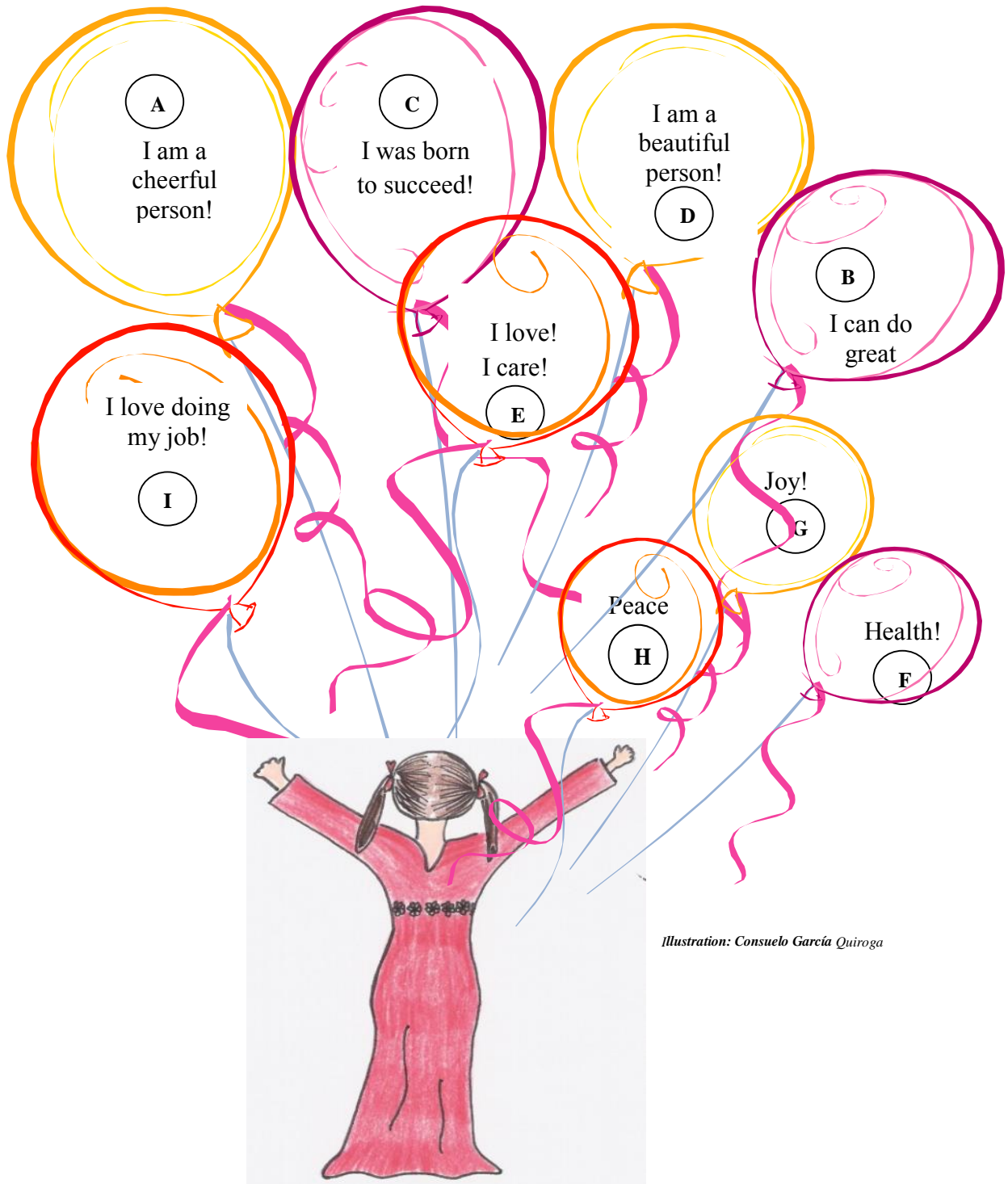


Illustration: Consuelo García Quiroga

4. Match numbers and letters to substitute negative attitudes for positive ones. You may use the same letter more than once.

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1. ____ | 5. ____ | 9. ____ | 13. ____ |
| 2. ____ | 6. ____ | 10. ____ | 14. ____ |
| 3. ____ | 7. ____ | 11. ____ | 15. ____ |
| 4. ____ | 8. ____ | 12. ____ | 16. ____ |

5. The ideas below describe people's personality. Tick (✓) the ones that best describe you.

- a. I am *kind* ____
- b. I am *loving* ____
- c. I am *caring* ____
- d. I am *giving* ____
- e. I am *capable* ____
- f. I am *knowledgeable* ____
- g. I am *sociable* ____
- h. I am *beautiful* ____
- i. I am *intelligent* ____



6. If you think you do not have some of these qualities, say why not.

I am not..... because

.....

I am as I

7. According to the ideas I ticked, I can conclude that the concept I have about myself is:

Excellent__ /very positive __ / positive __ / poor __ / very poor__

8. After making a reflection, I think I can improve.....

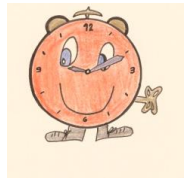
Lesson 2: **Building up or Destroying Self-concept**

General objective: To analyze the reason to have either a happy or a miserable day.

Specific objectives: (a) to find cause/effect ideas, (b) to identify expressions that convey maltreatment, (c) to transform rude expressions into kind and encouraging ones.

1. Read the short story below.

Learning strategy: getting general and specific information from a text



**Building up or destroying
Self-concept**

A seventh-grade boy named Michael is still lying in bed three minutes after his alarm goes off. All of a sudden his mother calls, to him, “Michael, you lazy-head, get your body out of bed and get down here before I send your father up there!” Michael gets out of bed, goes to get dressed, and can’t find a clean pair of socks. His mother tells him he’ll have to wear yesterday’s pair. He goes to brush his teeth and his older sister, who’s already locked herself in the bathroom, tells him to drop dead! He goes to breakfast to find soggy cereal waiting for him. As he leaves for school, he forgets his lunch and his mother calls to him, “Michael you’ve forgotten your lunch; you’d forget your head if it weren’t attached!” As he goes to the corner he sees the school bus pull away and so he has to walk to school. He’s late to school and has to get a pass from the principal who gives him a lecture.

Selected from 100 ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom.

Illustration: Consuelo García Quiroga

- 2. After reading the short story, underline the expressions that convey maltreatment. Write possible kind, though demanding, words or expressions to talk to the boy in the passage to make his day better.**

This was just the beginning of Michael's day.

3. **Work with one of your partners and write the concluding part of the story. Use your own words, or choose some of the ideas suggested below. Use proper verb tense.**

Learning strategy: using ideas from a short story to write reflective texts.

Come into the classroom – notice - forget homework – get a bad grade –
loose his pencil – make pronunciation mistakes - laugh at him – feel frustrated

4. **Here is a possible start for the second part of the story. You can start by writing about the moment when Michael got in the classroom.**

After leaving the principal's office, Michael _____

5. **Find the word that best describes Michael's feeling after facing his situations.**

6. **What circumstances would you change to help Michael be a happy young boy?**

7. **What was your personal feeling about the boy whose day was not successful?**

8. **Did the story remind you of an experience you had when you were little?**

YES___ NO___

9. **If you answered YES, would you like to mention it? YES ___ NO ___**

10. Recreate the story “Building up or destroying self-concept?” to make Michael feel cheerful and self-confident. Make necessary changes only.



Learning strategy: recreating discouraging short stories to motivate readers to accept their responsibilities without pain.

[illegible]

Illustration: Consuelo García Quiroga

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Findings

Research Approach

The data analysis stands on the Grounded Theory Approach as envisioned by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This approach let me define, offer theoretical ground to support the phenomenon observed through the implementation of short-story reading analysis and reflective writing worksheets to enhance students' self-esteem (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). According to Patton (2002), this theory "operates from a correspondence perspective in that it aims to generate explanatory propositions that correspond to real-world phenomena" (p. 489). Thus, by means of data gathered I recognized regular patterns, similarities, differences and the relation resulting from the implementation of the abovementioned worksheets.

Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire, teachers' field notes and student's artefacts entailed a sequenced process. I regarded "naming, grouping, finding relationships and displaying" (Freeman, 1996, p. 102) as well as "sifting, organising, summarising and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 120). These procedures connect to students' class interaction and the permanent observation of gradual transformation that allowed me to classify data. I also used the colour-coding technique to signal the codes (relevant issues), relate them (define) and name the categories, as suggested by Stottok, Bergaus and Gorra (2011). Therefore, colour coding assisted me in the recognition of signs indicating improvement of students' values, personal qualities and self-concept.

I triangulated the data on basis of the approach of Denzin and Lincoln's (1994), which included theoretical triangulation as the data gathered is interpreted from theories; and methodological triangulation as the data was collected via three instruments. I established two research categories to answer the research questions with their corresponding sub-categories, as shown in Table 1 below.

Research categories

Table 1

Research Categories

Main Question	Categories	Sub-categories	Patterns/ salient
How do short-story reading analysis and writing worksheets enhance Public Accountancy students' awareness of personal qualities and self-esteem in the EFL classroom?	Short-story content and reflective writing influencing students' role on self-esteem	<p>Maltreatment presented in short-story content as a source of frustration and failure</p> <p>Reflective writing as a means to construct positive self-concept/ self-esteem</p>	<p>- Identified maltreatment in short stories as a source of frustration</p> <p>- Identified mistreatment in short stories as a source of failure</p> <p>- Reflective writing as a means of students' positive self-concept</p> <p>-Students' role in building their self-esteem via reflective writing</p>
	Achieving students' awareness of self-esteem	<p>Students' awareness of success</p> <p>Students' consciousness of failure</p>	<p>-Recognising personality strengths</p> <p>-Writing about their personal qualities to identify values</p> <p>-Accepting personality weaknesses</p> <p>- Writing to confront opposed attitudes</p>

Short-story content and reflective writing influencing students' role on self-esteem.

Influencing students' role on self-esteem through short-story content and reflective writing lead them to identify mistreatment as a source of both frustration and failure. In this regard, self-esteem involves success or failure resulting from personal beliefs, feelings, opinions and behaviours. (Coopersmith, 1967); the level of motivation, happiness and achievement Brown (2006); Branden (1995); Campo et al. (2009); Gardner and Lambert (1972); and Rosenberg (1965). In short, there is a close interrelationship among attitudes and beliefs grown along life experiences regarding happiness-success-achievement and sadness-failure-disappointment. This first category of analysis yields two subcategories: *Maltreatment presented in short-story content as a source of frustration and failure and reflective writing as a means to construct positive self-concept/ self-esteem*, as addressed below.

Maltreatment presented in short-story content as a source of frustration and failure.

Having students analyse short-story content led them to identify maltreatment as a source of frustration and failure. Short stories are appropriate pedagogical means that entertain and remain in students' long-term memory (Rossiter, 2002), provide significant, understandable and motivating information that fosters learning (Porrás, 2010), and in the view of Lemov (2017), due to their shorter length, short stories let students re-read content and literary structures and statements, and strengthen knowledge. Most short stories offer situations conveying a moral or set a good example for readers, to learn a life lesson. Thus, the worksheets provided students with this subsidiary pedagogical resource that motivated and engaged them in the reading comprehension and analysis activities, while amusing and fomenting permanent reflection on

frustration and failure dealing with the construction or the deconstruction of self-esteem in the EFL classroom.

The topic of the first worksheet was *Building up or Destroying Self-Concept* and the content of the short story depicted maltreatment as a source of sadness, discouragement, frustration and failure Coopersmith, 1967; (as cited in Brown (2006, p. 141); Hilgard, (1963); Garder and Lamber (1972), which students quickly identified and associated with real-life personal and academic experiences. These factors are evinced in the following excerpts taken from the three data-gathering instruments.

Although students did not have an accurate definition of the term ‘attitude’ (Cortina, 1997), they were able to recognize words dealing with individuals’ behaviour, and tried to explain their meaning.

In the preliminary worksheet, students circled words conveying attitudes. They shared concepts and meaning by providing important comments and explanations, and started a class discussion as observed below.

All students: interacting to mention the words associated with attitudes: “hostility, peace, tolerance, peaceful, argumentation, flexibility, communication, generosity”

S1: “generosity starts at home”.

S2: “it starts in myself”.

S5: “tolerance is when we accept other people’s point of view”.

S3: “the result of flexibility is respect and acceptance”.

S4: “a lucky person reaches goals without making effort”

S6: “Yes, people need luck, but they have to work” [*sic*]

(Audio-recordings)

Prior to start short story content analysis the students made contrast between negative and positive expressions and attitudes associated with real life situations. They became aware of the importance of eradicating destructive expressions leading to failure and frustration, as observed in the next evidence.

Destructive words/ expressions turned into constructive words /expressions:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. I feel tired / I am not good. | a. I am a cheerful person. |
| 2. It is too much / I do not know how to... /..... | b. I can do great things. |
| 3. I will fail the test / I am not lucky. | c. I was born to succeed. |

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4. I am so ugly! d. I am a beautiful person.
5. I hate this. / I have no friends..... e. I love – I care.
6. I am sick. f. Health
7. It is too much. / I have no friends. g. Joy
8. I hate this. h. Peace
9. This is not for me. /Nobody helps me.....i. I love doing my job.

(Students artefacts)

This is what students replaced after analyzing the impact of these expressions on their daily experience.

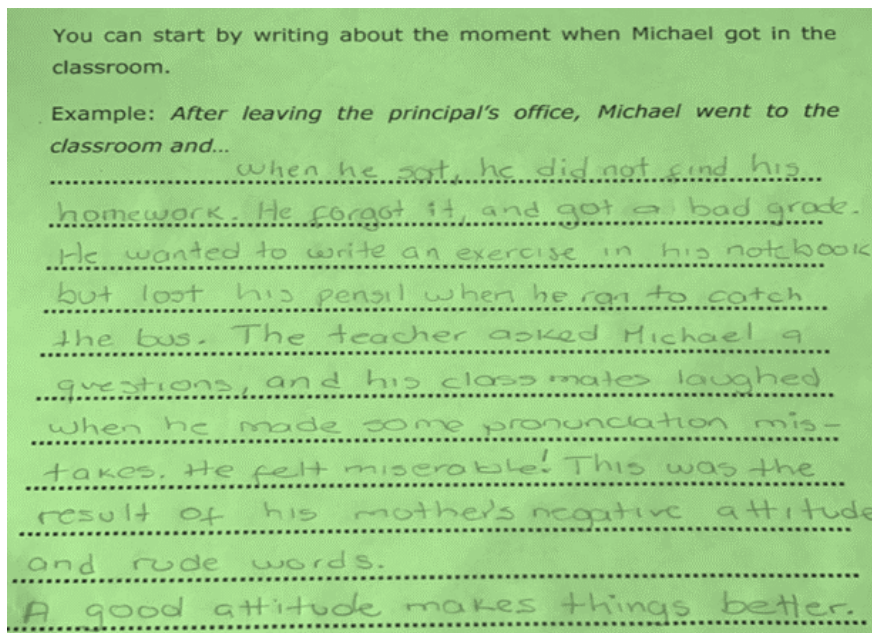
S1: 1 a-f-i / 2 b - i / 3 b - c / 4 d / 5 i / 6 a - f / 8 e -i-g / 9 a -b

S2: 1 b-c- / 2 b / 3c / 4 d / 5 e-i / 6 f / 7 b - g / 8 a- e / 9 a -b-i

S3: 1 a - I / 2 a-b / 3 b - c / 4 d / 5 I / 6 f- g / 7 b / 8 i / 9 b-i

(Students artefacts) [sic]

This was the most representative sample of answers, since the results of the other participants were similar to the ones included above.



(Students' artefacts) [sic]

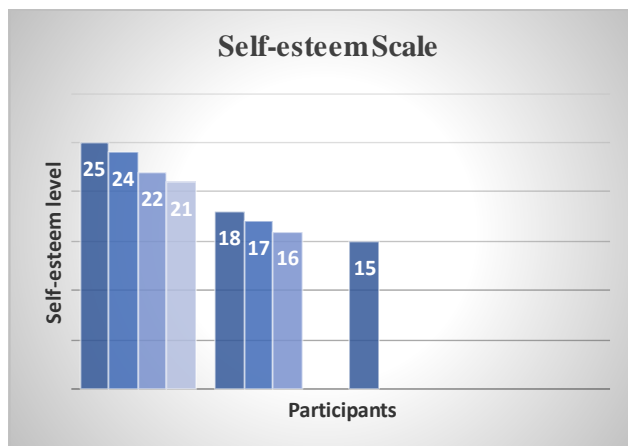
As noticed in the previous evidence, the students were able to recognize the importance of substituting common negative expressions for encouraging/cheerful ones. Likewise, after

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reading the short story the students were able to create the second part based on the negative events, which led to an unhappy ending. Nevertheless, when they provided the answers in the questionnaire, adapted from Rosenberg's (1965) Self-esteem Scale, to measure their self-esteem, questions marked with an asterisk have an inverse score. The students showed different self-concept levels by answering 10 questions, as evinced below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Q1: I am pleased with myself. | Q6: *I sometimes feel I am useless. |
| Q2: *Sometimes, I feel I am good for nothing. | Q7: I feel I am valuable, compared to others. |
| Q3: I think I have many good qualities. | Q8: I would like to feel more self-respect. |
| Q4: I can do things to compete with other people. | Q9: *Sometimes, I think I am a disaster. |
| Q5: *I think I do not have reasons to feel proud of myself. | Q10: I adopt a positive attitude to myself. |
- (Questionnaire)**

According to the answers provided by each student, I could notice that students still need to increase awareness of their own personal qualities and values. There is an evidence in the score they reached after answering the above questions according to the scale below:



Student 2 scored **12** points out of 30, which represented the highest level, followed by Student 10 with **15**, and Student 5, with **16** points. Next is Student 9, who got **17**, and Student 1, with **18**. The coming students reached a better score as follows: Students 6 and 7 with **21** points, Student 3, with **22** points, Student 8, with **24**; and the one with the highest score, was Student 4, with **25** points out of 30. [sic]

(Questionnaire)

After I delivered a worksheet comprising a series of negative expressions that interfere with people's success, students started analysing them, and discussing about the ones they mainly use without being conscious of that. This reflection was the previous stage to motivate students to the short story reading analysis, and the subsequent reflective writing activities.

Students were surprised when they received the worksheets developed by their English teacher. I started by asking them routinely expressions showing disappointment or poor personal self-concept. All students reacted confirming that they tended to highlight negative aspects about their personality when facing ordinary and challenging situations. They were curious about the content that the short story presents and expressed their motivation to read it. While Student No. 2 also said: "they always leave a message to bring into practice", Student No. 9 affirmed: "short histories include negative situations like the school ones".

[sic]

(Teachers' field notes)

The short story portrays a series of negative attitudes related to daily routines in which lack of planning leads to maltreatment, discouragement, frustration, sadness and failure in fulfilling personal and academic duties. Student No. 4 expressed "negative expressions like lazy head are not kind and the boy is sad" whereas Student No.6 mentioned, "the problems of the boy like ... for example... the lunch, the bus frustrated the boy" [sic]

(Teachers' field notes)

After analyzing the content of the first story, the students were able to create the second episode to demonstrate how maltreatment leads to a sequence of frustrating actions that cause failure and people's unhappiness, as observed in the next excerpt written by a student.

Reflective writing as a means to construct positive self-concept/ self-esteem. Reflective writing allows student to ponder the content of the short stories, analyze and contrast favorable and unfavorable personal behaviors, and create an alternative story leading to the construction of positive self-concept/ self-esteem. As proposed by Maughan and Webb (2001), reflective activities include recapturing the experience of an event (the short story situation). Examining the situation from different perspectives (by re-creating the story to include aspects that cause rewarding results related to self-esteem); and identifying the moral or life lesson expressed in both the previous short story and the new version written by the students. Hence, reflective

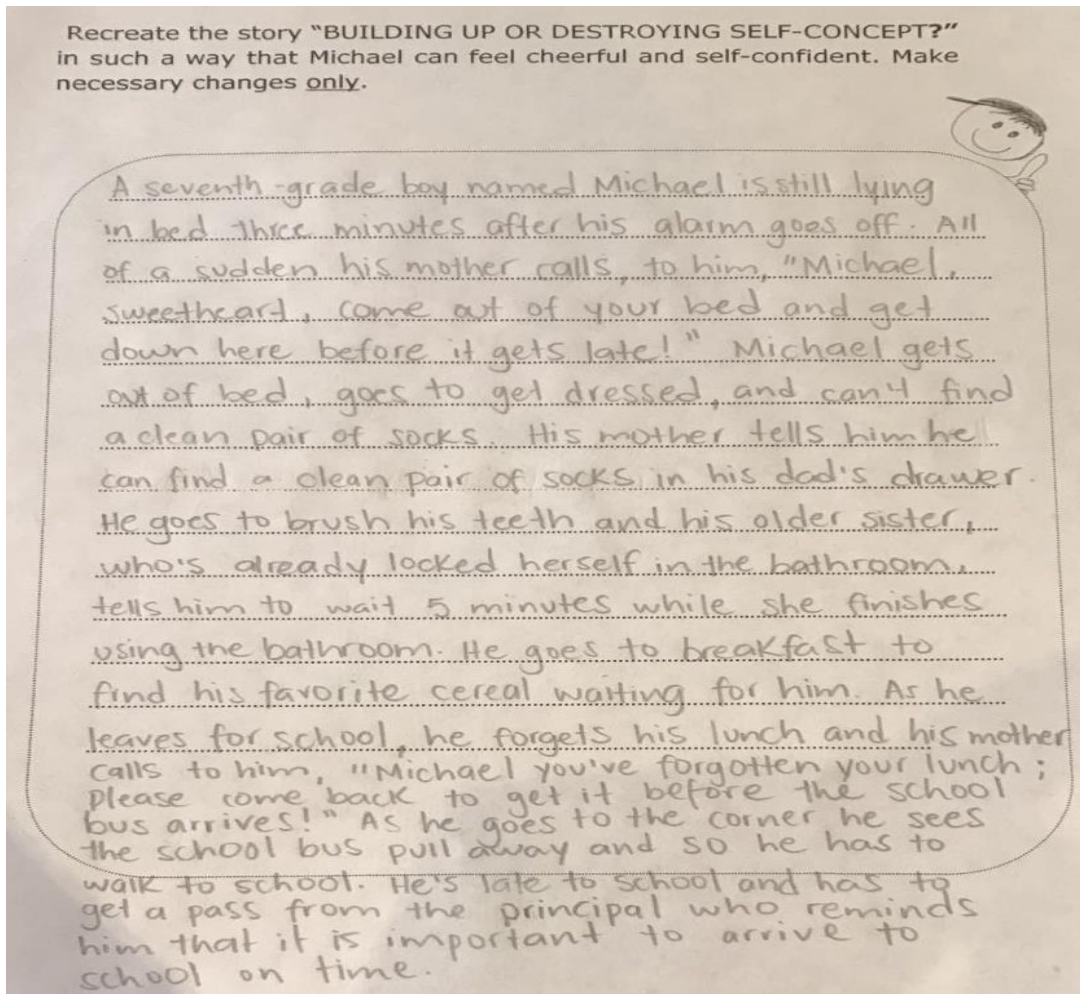
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writing stands as a means of students' positive self-concept and students' role in building their self-esteem via reflective writing, as observed in the following samples.

When exchanging ideas about positive experiences, the teacher asked the students to complete the idea "*let me tell you about the most wonderful person I have ever met,*" all of them thought about people like their parents, their brothers or sisters, a school friend. No one said "myself."

Students (interacting): "my father, my parents, my twin brother, a friend from my school..." When I asked, "How about yourself?" Some students said "verdad" (That is right). [sic]

(Audio recordings)



[sic] (Students' artefacts)

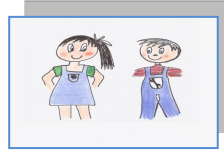
I conducted a self-reflection to let students think about their personal qualities. The items they ticked were very close to their self-concept. Although the students knew they had many

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qualities, it was hard for them to recognize and accept them openly. All students agreed to be kind, capable, sociable, and intelligent.

I am <i>kind</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	I am <i>knowledgeable</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am <i>loving</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	I am <i>sociable</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am <i>caring</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	I am <i>beautiful</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am <i>giving</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	I am <i>intelligent</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am <i>capable</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	

(Students' artefacts)



The previous selection corresponds to the students' answers in Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale in which **Students 2 and 10** disagreed about the statement "I am not pleased with myself," and **Students 1, 2** (again), **5**, and **9** expressed that "they do not have many good qualities." It is worth mentioning that after analyzing the content of the short stories, the reflected about their qualities, and started to accept their personal strengths. **Student 4** strongly agreed about having quite a number of good qualities. (By the way, this student reached the highest self- concept score). It was hard for students to accept their personal beauty, as they associate this quality with physical appearance; not with the beauty of a person as a human being. [sic] **(Questionnaire)**

Students were surprised when they received the worksheets developed by their English teacher. I started by asking them routinely expressions showing disappointment or poor personal self-concept. All students reacted confirming that they tended to highlight negative aspects about their personality when facing ordinary and challenging situations. They were curious about the content of the short story presents and expressed their motivation to read it. While Student No. 2 also said: "they always leave a message to bring into practice", Student No. 9 affirmed: "short histories include negative situations like the school ones." [sic] **(Teachers' field notes)**

The discussion hitherto involved the influence of short-story content and reflective writing in the construction of students' self-esteem. Next, I argued students' consciousness of their self-concept.

Achieving students' awareness of self-esteem. This second research category of analysis refers to accomplishing student's realization of their self-esteem. On the subject of self-esteem as an affective phenomenon, it may be appreciable through artefacts; the "looking-glass self," associated with the perceptions people have of others, (Cooley as cited in Guindon, 2010); the "feelings and emotions toward the self" (James, 1890) and the "interactions in which individuals experience themselves as reflected in the behaviour of others" (Mead, 1934, p. 29). Therefore,

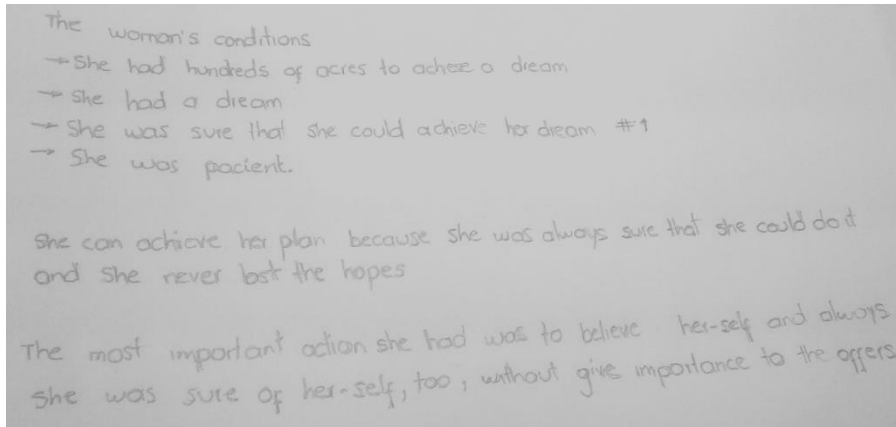
achieving awareness of self-esteem involves personal perceptions of the self, perceptions from others and interactions with others that lead to have a wide panorama of self-concept. These situations incorporate affective, social and interpretative aspects proper of assertive human beings. This second category of analysis entails two subcategories: *Students awareness of success and Students' consciousness of failure*.

Students' awareness of success. Having students recognize their personality strengths and write about their personal qualities to identify their values directly, contributes to making them conscious of their level of success. Considering that self-esteem results from a self-assessment group process; that it preserves the individual and the group; that it is advantageous for every individual and the society he/she is immersed in (Cast & Burke, n. d.); and that it has to do with the complete constructive appraisal of the person's self. (Gecas 1982; Rosenberg 1990; Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, and Rosenberg 1995) argued that building self-concept is not an isolated endeavor. Rather than that, it is a collective and beneficial or successful one for both, the person and the social group, whenever it leads to self-awareness of success. The next evidences taken from the four instruments corroborate the aspects abovementioned.

On basis of the answers provided by the students, some of them made additional comments to justify their views about some personal beliefs.

I asked students some questions about class situations in which they supported each other by exchanging ideas to find the best way to write about a specific situation. Some of them asked questions about the way to start a short story; for example, Student 1 asked "What goes first?" The teacher answered, "Mentioning aspects related to time, place and the main character". Student 10 asked "Can we use the past tense? ... or present? The teacher answered, "as you are going to write about a past event, you must use simple past tense". Students started to exchange some ideas about the mother and boy's behaviour. Students 7 said "Do you think the boy's mother is responsible for his bad behaviour", Student 5 answered "Yes, because she doesn't give orders" and Students 3 said "I'm in agreement because the boy's actions show no discipline". Finally, Student 2 concluded that "If there are rules people behave good" [*sic*]
(***Audio recordings***)

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[sic] (*Students' artefacts*)

Regarding question 7, I feel I am valuable, compared to others, **Student 4** affirmed: “Yes, when I compare me with other partners, sometimes I feel I am better than them in some aspects, but I do not always have the same idea. Sometimes, they have better results. Cuando mis compañeros tienen éxito, no me siento muy valioso” (Teacher’s translation: When my partners are successful, I do not feel very valuable).

Student 2: “When I think about my values, no tengo seguridad en cuanto a mis fortalezas.” (Teacher’s translation: I am not sure about my strengths). “I feel they are better than me, and I let them decide about what to do when we work in group.”

Student 8: “I strongly believe that I am valuable compared with my partners. Como yo me siento satisfecho de mí mismo, (teacher’s translation: as I feel pleased with myself) I usually try to do a good work to be at the same level with my partners.”

Student 5: “I disagree about this idea, because I do not like to compare myself with others. There are people with better qualities and others who are not very good. That is my point.” [sic]

(*Questionnaire*)

Having in mind the previous answers and comments, I realized that there are still students who do not feel free to compare their strengths and weaknesses with their partners. Perhaps they have some prejudices to recognize their positive qualities, or they lack of self-confidence to accept and express their positive self-concept.

I invited students to create a new story transforming frustrating or failing attitudes or behaviours of the characters into encouraging and successful ones allowing for a beneficial outcome for the construction of a high-self-concept. As students were writing, Student No. 1 whispered to Student No. 10; “*Lo que hay que hacer es coger y comparar las partes negativas de la historia y cambirlas por situaciones positivas para transformar el resultado y que la mujer mejore su autoestima*” (What we have to do is to take the negative aspects from the original story and transform the result for the woman to improve her self-esteem” [sic]

(*Teachers' field notes*)

Students' awareness of failure. This last and second subcategory contrasts with the previous one and ratifies that guiding students to acknowledge their personality weaknesses, as

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well as writing stories to confront opposed attitudes, powerfully conduce to failure awareness that can be tackled by turning it in favour of self-esteem. In respect of failure, any change in its meaning must go together with strengthening efforts as the desirable source to defeat indifference as the probable reason for failure (Covington, n. d.). The author further asserted that, “This focus on effort should allow alternative explanations for failure, such as improper planning or unrealistic expectations, rather than assuming that lack of success means lack of ability (Covington, p. 101). In other words, students’ reflective writing allowed them to manage lack of interest and ability when facing challenging situations, as illustrated in the following transcriptions from the four data gathering instruments.

Students exchanged comments about former experiences in which they were afraid of taking the risk to face challenging situation. Student 10 said, “When teachers ask to students to present homework in front I always prefer to stay in my seat and when I listen to other students I notice my homework was good, but I sure to present in front”. Student 3 said, “I am not sure and then I learn the lesson “Be self-confident”.

[sic]

(Audio recordings)

The students made a contrast between the man in the previous text, and the character from “A woman’s dream plan comes true” mentioned in the evidence referred in the students’ artefact above.

Student 2 ratified his/her answer “sometimes, I feel good for nothing” with the following comment: “If the man had a bad experience in the past, he is afraid of another disaster.”

Student 1 somehow agreed with student 2: “I sometimes feel I am useless” and justified the man’s attitude to try to do something, when he has fear to fail.

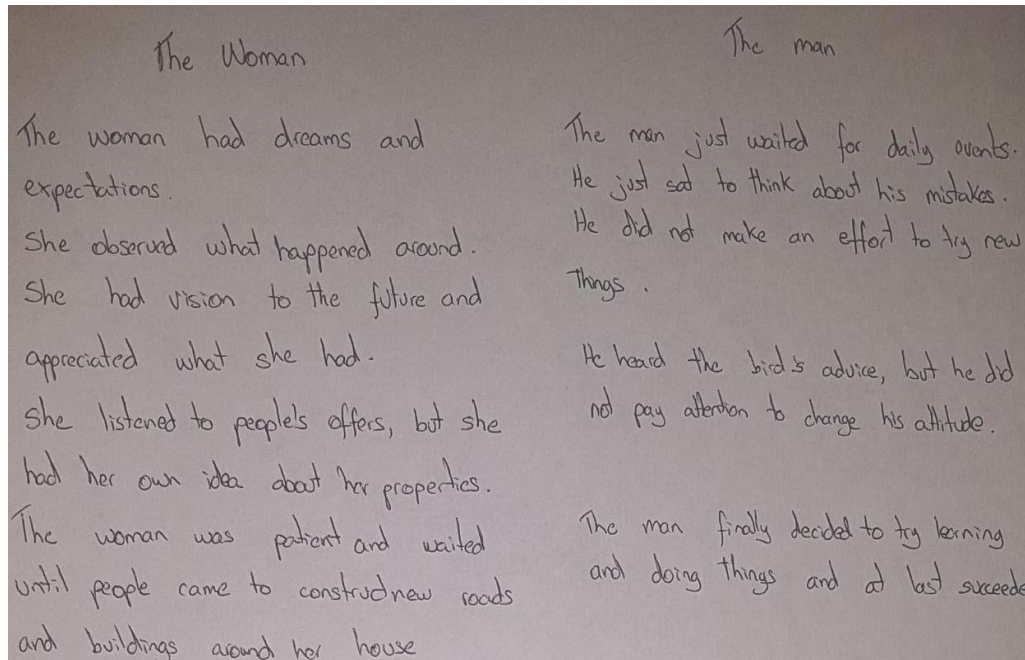
Student 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and **10** disagreed with the man’s attitude by expressing “I would like to feel more self-respect.” Therefore, they agreed with the little bird in the story, who suggested him to try to do something to have success. [sic]

(Questionnaire)

Once I delivered the two short stories “A woman’s dream plan comes true” and “The man who sat around all day and did nothing” the students decided to work in pairs to compare the characters’ attitudes. They first read the stories, and then they discussed about attitudes leading to success or failure. According to the students’ deductions, they identified attitudes related to success and failure. **Student 5** said, “cómo iba a lograr sus metas, si no hacía nada” (How could the man accomplish his goals if he did not do anything?) **Student 6** emphasized the contrast between the woman’s vision for business and the man’s pessimism, expecting failure all the time.

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Regarding contrasts in people's attitudes perceived by the students, one of them wrote some ideas to make a parallel of the characters from the texts mentioned above. There is an evidence of it below.



[sic] (*Students' artefacts*)

Students 4 and 7 made comments about people's fear to try new activities because they are afraid of making mistakes. **S7:** "yes, the man doesn't try to do an action, and says that he is a failure. Before doing an action, he knows it is bad" [sic]

(*Teachers' field notes*)

So far I have described the three research categories that emerged from the data collected during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention and inform them with related theory and my own interpretation.

Once the students performed different reflections after analysing the questionnaire and the content of several short stories, throughout the process, I asked the participants to highlight their personal and professional strengths to persuade the Human Resources Committee of a company to consider the possibility to hire them in the Accountancy area. They were able to write their

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own profile describing their strengths to simulate a job application, as observed in a students' personal profile.

Being aware of their qualities at personal and professional level, the students recognized their very positive qualities and values to perform individual and group work to increase their knowledge and accomplish their personal and group goals. In contrast with the initial concepts, they are more confident to express their self-concept, which is a sign of self-esteem awareness.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are an applicant interested in working at a multinational enterprise. Complete your personal profile taking into account that you are the right candidate to work there.

PERSONAL PROFILE

Self motivated when I succeed, persuasive, convincing, nice treatment, proactive, and excellent with open public relationship.

I am hard working..... and very responsible enjoy starting..... new projects since I am very creative... I also like working with other people..... I have good..... communication skills and telephone techniques. I am optimistic., and I always keep a positive..... attitude and have the ability to learn.....new things very quickly.

In what concerns to productivity, I consider myself as a/an confident worker to lead a work team. I am able to share.....my knowledge on techniques and production strategies with my partners.....I enjoy learning from my partners too. In short, I always reach.....my goals.

(Student's artefact)

In the concluding stage of the current research study, the students had the chance to express their perceptions about the effect of short story analysis of content and reflective writing on their personal growth and academic experience and accomplishments, as evinced in the evidences bellow.

Final Questionnaire

1. Do you consider that working on self-esteem was beneficial to you? Yes
Why? “Because I could recognize my values through the reflection.”
2. Comparing your self-esteem level before reading the short stories, did you improve it?
Yes, very much.
3. Based on personal or group reflections, did you identify qualities you had not recognized before?
“Yes, I did. Optimism, generosity, and beauty.”
4. Write a word that best describes you as a valuable person.
“Loyalty”
5. What was the effect of this study on your academic accomplishment during this term?
“I felt more confident when I studied, and I reached better results in my learning process.”
6. What values lead us to a happy and successful life?
“A high level of self-esteem and responsibility.” [*sic*]

(Final questionnaire)

Teacher’s translation of questions and answers from this questionnaire.

ENCUESTA FINAL

Por favor responda con sinceridad las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Considera que el trabajo relacionado con la autoestima redundó en beneficio personal? ☒ SÍ ☐ NO

¿Por qué?

Porque a través de la reflexión
pude reconocer mis valores.

2. Si compara el concepto que usted tenía de sí mismo antes de realizar el trabajo de lectura de historias cortas, ¿cree haber mejorado su nivel de autoestima? ☐ SÍ ☐ NO

En caso afirmativo, indique: MUY POCO BASTANTE ☒ MUCHO

3. Con base en los momentos de reflexión personal o grupal ¿identificó algunas cualidades que no había descubierto en el pasado? ¿Cuál(es)?

Si. El optimismo, la generosidad,
la belleza.

4. Escriba una palabra que lo (la) identifique como una persona valiosa.

Lealtad.

5. ¿Qué incidencia tuvo este trabajo en el éxito alcanzado en este período académico?

Senti más seguridad cuando es-
tudie. Logré mejores resultados
en mi proceso de aprendizaje.

6. ¿Cuáles son los valores que nos proporcionan una vida feliz y exitosa?

El alto nivel de autoestima y la
responsabilidad.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Conclusions

This chapter portrays the conclusions and the pedagogical implications as a source of further research studies to strengthen and increase the teachers' interest in the field of language learning as an instrument to educate self-confident citizens as agents of social and professional transformation. As observed in the analysis of data gathered through the instruments, there was a positive evolution in the students' self-concept. Regarding the category "Short-story content and reflective writing influencing students' role on self-esteem" the findings showed that short story content and reflective writing influenced students' role on self-esteem identifying maltreatment as a factor of frustration and failure. As asserted by Mann, Hosman, Schaalma and de Vries (2004), positive self-esteem leads individuals to succeed, achieve goals, or even manage to face and handle physical disease. On the other hand, the teacher's guidance through the materials provided to accomplish reflective writing as a means to construct positive self-concept/self-esteem played a significant role throughout the process. Likewise, according to the category "students achieved awareness of self-esteem," they recognized personality strengths and accepted their weaknesses confronted in their reflective writing. In comparison with the results in the initial questionnaire, it was possible to observe meaningful growth in the students' self-perception, when writing about their strengths in their personal profile presented in the sample of a student's artefact.

Pedagogical Implications

It is worth mentioning that students need the teachers' support to accompany the process of personal reflection to identify, recognize and accept themselves as valuable, creative and self-confident individuals, with a mission to fulfil their personal and professional goals.

Finally, teachers' have a serious commitment to become a role pattern to foster moral, ethical, and aesthetic values to educate worthy citizens. From Cury's (2008) view, children have a permanent picture of parents and teachers' positive and negative behaviour. Although parents (and teachers) tell beautiful words, sometimes their attitudes are contradictory. Therefore, parents, teachers and adults must be coherent and consequent in thoughts and actions to provide youngsters with honest role patterns.

Summing up, this research study incorporated the analysis of short-story contents to encourage teachers and students to recognize their values and reflect about the human and professional potential to grow at all levels within different contexts. Likewise, other type of readings may offer different kinds of analysis to foster values and construct a more fair respectful and respected society.

Limitations

Despite the number of class sessions scheduled for the academic term, it was necessary to maximize the time to perform side-reading activities, different from the ESP material dealing with topics based on Accountancy, which was the content-based material of the course. However, the students' positive response to the development of the current research study was a great contribution to enrich both their awareness of their self-esteem, and my personal and professional growth.

Consequently, I deemed paramount to propose new research enquiries to continue working in the field of values and self-esteem as an essential issue to educate self-confident professionals.

Questions for further research

- ❖ What is the impact of self-esteem issues incorporated to specific academic reading materials on undergraduate students' attitudes?
- ❖ How do values and self-esteem awareness influence students' attitudes?
- ❖ How does positive self-concept foster and strengthen professional success?

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Adapted from Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965)

Instructions: The following statements relate with your self-concept. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

No.	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I am pleased with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	*Sometimes, I feel I am good for nothing.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I think I have many good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I can do things to compete with other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	*I think I do not have reasons to feel proud of myself.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	*I sometimes feel I am useless.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	I feel I am valuable, compared to others.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I would like to feel more self-respect.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	*Sometimes, I think I am a disaster.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	I adopt a positive attitude to myself.	SA	A	D	SD
T					

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk have the opposite score: SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the score for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem.

Appendix B
Teacher's Field Notes

Teacher: Clara I Quiroga C.	Date:	Topic: Piloting	Complementary Materials: Photocopies	Worksheet No:
Research question: General research objective:			Specific research objectives.	
General Observations			Analysis	

Appendix C

Audio Recordings

Population: Level IV Students	Date:	Topic: P	Complementary Materials:	Worksheets N° 1:
		Session:		
Research question:			Specific research objectives:	
General research objective:				
Transcription			Analysis	

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Reference: Invitation to participate in the research study “Short Story Content Analysis to Enhance Self-esteem Awareness”

Dear students,

I am very pleased to invite you to participate in a research study aimed at improving your self-esteem, as part of the academic process in the current term. I guarantee respect, and personal privacy about feelings and information provided through different data gathering instruments.

Having a positive self-concept is part of your personal and professional growth. Thus, I would really appreciate your willingness to accept my request.

Cordially yours,

Clara Inés Quiroga Cabra

Student's response:

After knowing the purpose and the conditions of the above research study, I am willing to participate in this process.

Student's name: _____

Student's signature: _____

Appendix E

Worksheet N° 2:

Contrasting Characters' Attitudes

Learning strategy: Identifying positive attitudes leading to success.

General objective: identify the secret of success.

Specific objectives: (a) to state cause/effect relation of ideas (b) to establish contrast in attitudes.

Warm Up

1. Think about situations in which your dreams have come true. Share your points with a partner; then share them with the group.
2. What factors did you consider when you decided to register in this career?
3. How did you know you had succeeded in this election?

Pre-reading.

Making predictions. Read the heading of the short story below. Predict and speculate about the content. Discuss and compare your perceptions with you partners.

While reading

1. What did the woman have in mind?

2. Complete the following ideas with information from the text.
 - a. The lady accomplished her goals, as a consequence of her _____
 - b. The _____ of her property made her think it would be a _____ neighborhood.
3. In addition to location, find a factor that influenced progress in the surroundings of the woman's house.
_____.
4. Read the statements below and analyze the relation of the ideas. Write **cause/effect** or **contrast**.
 - a. The woman appreciated what she had. / Neighbors undervalued her property.

 - b. They started new constructions around. /The woman decided to sell her land.

 - c. The woman had broad vision. /Investors backed her. _____

A woman's dream plan comes true



This land was located about a mile from the nearest highway and five miles from the nearest town. But this woman had a dream. She held in her mind the vision that one day her pasture land would become one of the most beautiful suburban shopping centers in the country. In a few years, the nearby military base was enlarged.

A four-lane highway was built, and it bordered on this woman's pasture land. Immediately retailers began making offers to purchase the land. But she did not want to sell it – she wanted to develop it. She refused all offers and held on to her dream, though for financial reasons it would have seemed wise to sell.

Months went by, and then one day she noticed a contractor with his men and equipment working on property adjoining hers. She explained her dream to the contractor; he assured her that her dream could materialize, and that he would help. He suggested formation of a corporation in which she would furnish the land, and he would furnish equipment and men, and do the contracting and building. He explained that he had a wealthy friend who would provide financial backing and become the necessary third party in the corporation.

Today the woman is president of that corporation, which owns a housing development, an apartment development, and a colonial style shopping center – one of the most beautiful in the country. She had a plan, and now she has all that she dared to envision, and more!

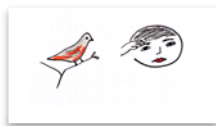
Selected from DARE TO PROSPER! By Catherine Ponde

Worksheet N°3

General objective: To identify failure attitudes.

Specific objectives: (a) to state cause/effect of ideas (b) to deduce the lesson from the texts (c) to contrast characters' attitudes.

Learning strategy: Identifying the way to turn failure attitudes into success.



The man who sat around all day and did nothing

Once there was a man who sat around all day and did nothing. One day he was sitting outside and a bird came and perched on the fence next to him.

The bird asked the man, "Why do you always sit around all day and do nothing?" The man replied, "I'm a failure. I mess up everything I try to do. So, since I can't do anything right, I don't do anything at all."

The bird asked, "If there was something you knew you couldn't fail at, would you be willing to give it a try?"

"Sure," said the man. "But what could there possibly be that I could do without failing at it?"

"Here's what you do," said the bird. "First, think of three things you'd really like to be able to do. Then, try to do the first one. If you fail, take a sheet of paper, write what the thing was that you tried to do, and next to it, write the words, 'I can't do this.'"

"Then try the second thing. If you fail at that also, take your sheet of paper, and write what the thing was that you tried to do, and next to it, write the words 'I can't do that.'"

"Then try the third thing. If you also fail at this, take your sheet of paper one more time and write what the thing was that you tried to do and next to it write the words, 'I can't do this either.' Then hang the sheet of paper on this fence, where you'll see it each day when you sit in your chair. Do you think you can do this?"

"Well," said the man. "It sounds like all I have to do is fail, and I'm good at failing. So I guess I could do that."

"Then go do it!" said the bird, and he flew away.

The man decided he'd do what the bird had suggested. So, he thought for a few minutes until he thought of three things that he'd really like to be able to do. Then he got up from his chair and went to do them. The man tried to do the first thing, and he failed. So, he took a sheet of paper, and he wrote what the thing was, and next to it he wrote the words, "I can't do this." Then the man tried to do the second thing, and he failed again. So, he took the sheet of paper, and wrote what the thing was, and next to it he wrote the words, "I can't do that." Then the man tried to do

the third thing, and again he failed, as he had expected. So, he took a sheet of paper, and he wrote what the thing was, and next to it he wrote the words, "I can't do this either."

Then the man hung the sheet of paper on the fence, and he sat down and waited for the bird to come back so he could tell him all about he had failed again. The man sat there for the rest of the day. But the bird didn't come back. So, the man took one last look at the sheet of paper, then he went inside and went to bed. The next morning, the man went outside, and he sat in his chair. He looked at the sheet of paper hanging on the fence. He read about the three things he'd really liked to do, and he read that he couldn't do them. Then he waited for the bird to come back. He waited all day, but the bird didn't come back at all. So, the man went inside and went to bed.

Each day the man would go outside, sat in his chair, and look at the sheet of paper hanging on the fence. Each day he'd read about the three things he'd really like to do, and he'd read that he couldn't do them. And each day he'd wait for the bird to come back. And as he waited for the bird to come back, he'd think about the three things he'd really like to do. And he'd think about how the sheet of paper said he couldn't do them. One day as he thought about this he began to get irritated. He said to himself, "What right does this sheet of paper have to tell me what I can and cannot do?" So, the man got up from his chair, took the sheet of paper, and went to try the things again. Then the man said to himself: "If I was able to do the first thing, maybe I could do the second thing too." So, he tried to do the second thing, and he failed. But the man remembered that when he had tried to do the first thing many times he had finally gotten it right too. So, he tried the third thing again, and he failed again. And he tried many more times, and he failed many more times. But then, he tried it one more time he succeeded! He had managed to do the third thing right! Again the man was so excited he jumped up and down and shouted, "I did it! I did it!"

Then he took the sheet of paper, and next to the third item, he scratched out the words, "I can't do this either" and in big letters he wrote "I CAN DO THIS TOO"

Then the man took the sheet of paper and hung it on the fence, and sat down to wait for the bird to return. But this time, as the man was sitting there he thought about the three things that he really likes to do; and he said to himself: "Why am I sitting in this chair, waiting for a bird, when I could be doing the things I really like to do?" So, the man got up and did the things he really liked to do. And the man was happier than he'd ever been in his entire life.

One day, as the man was doing one of the things he really liked to do, he saw someone doing that looked like fun. And the man remembered how he had learned to do the three things, and he thought to himself, "If I try, I am sure I can learn to do that too." So, the man tried, and tried, and kept trying until he got it right. The man said, "This is fun! I love learning how to do new things." And after that, the man was never afraid to try anything.

One day, the man was learning to do something new, and the bird came and perched next to him. The bird said, "What are you doing?" And the man said, "I'm learning something new." Then he told the bird all about how he had tried to do the three things, and how he had failed at each one. And he told the bird about the piece of paper, and how it had made him mad. He told the bird

how he had tried to do the three things again and again until he had gotten them right. And as he was telling the bird these things, he suddenly realized that this had been the bird's plan from the beginning. The man looked at the little bird, and the bird smiled at him. "Enjoy your life," said the little bird, "and always be glad for all the things you can do." "I will," said the man. "Thanks to you I now realize that I can learn to do anything if I just put my mind to it and keep trying." "You have learned your lesson well," said the little bird. And with that, he flew off to his next assignment. And the man, who used to sit around all day and do nothing, now, spent his time doing the things he loved. And he had so much fun doing them that he never wanted to sit around all day and do nothing. And he never thought of himself as a failure ever again.

Selected from <http://fly.hiwaay.net> The Man Who Sat Around All Day and Did Nothing_ a short story by Araykay.

After reading

1. As you read the previous stories, take notes about the main characters' significant attitudes, and establish cause/effect relationship in your ideas.
2. Based on the two stories you have just read, write the aspects you consider relevant to state a contrast between the main characters.
3. What was different about the way they reached their goals?
4. What did each character have in mind?
5. Discuss your points of view, and exchange your perceptions with a partner.
6. Share the lesson you learned with the class group.
7. Write a reflective/contrastive paragraph about the importance of having a positive self-concept, what people can do when they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and the secret to succeed in life.

Worksheet 4: Understanding Disability

General objective: to identify the main idea of the short story.

Specific objectives: (a) state contrastive ideas; (b) understand the reason to make a decision; (c) state the relation cause/effect of ideas; (d) write your impressions after making a reflection of the story.

Learning strategy: making reflections about physical appearance and values.

Warm up

1. Reflect on these points:

- a. Have you ever made sudden decisions (buy/get something,) attracted by the appearance?
- b. Was it a good choice or did you regret buying it?
- c. What was the result?

2. What does the heading “Understanding Disability” mean to you?

While reading

3. Find the complementary idea in the text. State the relation among them. (Cause/effect, contrast, opposite ideas).

- a. The puppies are expensive / _____

- b. Although the little boy just had a few coins, / _____

- c. The farmer whistled / _____

- d. Among all the dogs, the little boy chose / _____

Puppies for Sale

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the Eyes of a little boy. Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies."

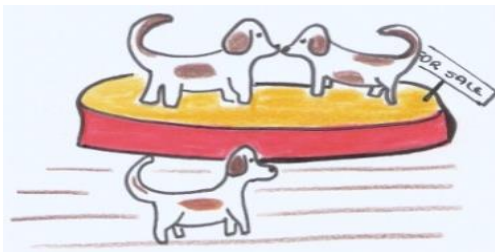
"Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "these puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money."

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?"

"Sure," said the famer.

And with that he let out a whistle, "Here, Dolly!" he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared; this One noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up...



Illustrations: Consuelo García Quiroga

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt.

The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would."

With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both side leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands." The world is full of people who need someone who understands.



Retrieved from: www.english-for-students.com/puppies-for-sale.html Puppies for Sale, Moral Stories.

Illustrations: Consuelo García Quiroga

After reading

4. The best option to summarize the story is:

- a. Disable people try to find something according to their limitations.
- b. The farmer did not want to sell the **runt** (the weakest dog).
- c. Physical appearance does not always embody/represent values.
- d. The runt was the best puppy.

Supplementary Worksheet 1: Telling about Great Things

General objective: To emphasize the importance of sharing motivating topics of conversation.

Specific objectives: (a) To associate find encouraging expressions with cheerful attitudes leading to successful daily activities; (b) to accept and assure personal qualities through daily self-reflection; and (c) to make a resolution about self-acceptance by recognizing personal abilities and qualities.

1. Sharing opinions and experiences

- a. What are some common expressions people use when they wake up and look at themselves on the mirror?
- b. What are people's comments about the traffic in the city?
- c. What do people usually say about the weather?

2. In contrast with the previous comments, can you make any suggestions about encouraging topics of conversation? Share our proposals with the group.

Learning strategy: associating prior expressions with positive attitudes to increase self-concept awareness.

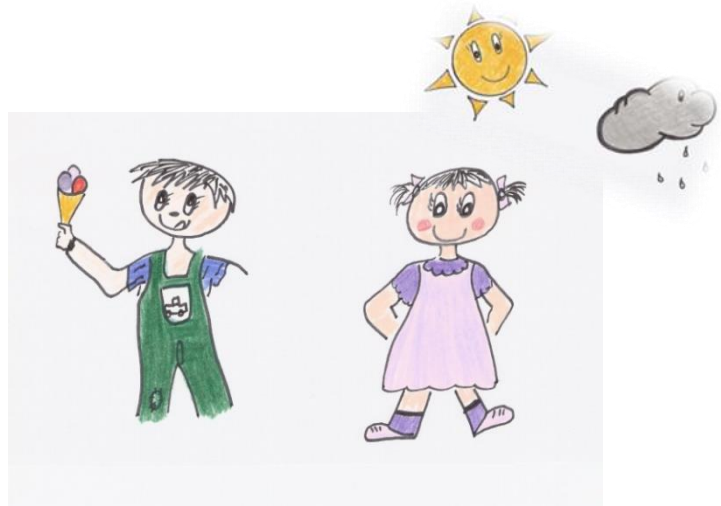
We want to tell you
about our hobbies!



Illustrations: Consuelo García Quiroga

- 3. Instead of complaining about daily situations that disturb people's activities, think of fun and productive activities to create a positive atmosphere around you.**

We want to tell you about our wonderful holiday!



- 4. Make a reflection about the way you can turn yourself into a self-confident person who deserves being trusted.**

Individuals who have a favorable self-concept convey encouraging thoughts and express enthusiasm through self-confident attitudes, body language, and daily activities. Classmates and people around them perceive that, and feel attracted to socialize or work with them.

Let me tell you about
the most wonderful
person I have ever met!



Whom do you think of?

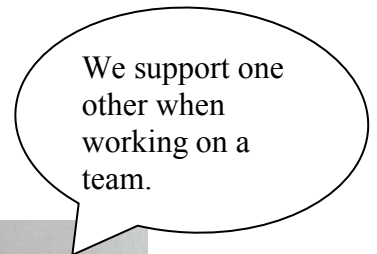
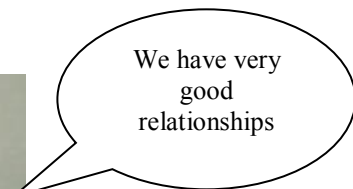
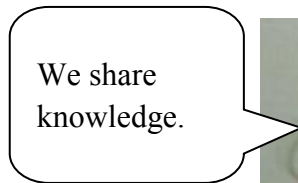
Who would that wonderful person be?

- 5. After considering all the qualities of that person you have just thought of, did you happen to think about yourself? Make a reflection about your values, your outstanding qualities, your attitudes, your skills. How much you do to grow as an individual, and make the decision to consider YOURSELF as the most valuable human being.**

Supplementary Worksheet 2

Recognizing Professional Profile

1. These people are recognizing their professional strengths.



Illustrations: Consuelo García Quiroga

Closing Activities

Imagine that you are an applicant interested in working at a multinational enterprise. Complete your personal profile considering that you are the right candidate to work there.

Personal Profile

Motivated when I succeed, persuasive, convincing, nice treatment, proactive, and excellent with open _____ public _____ relationship.

I am hard _____ and very _____. I enjoy _____ new projects since I am very _____. I also like working with other _____. I have _____ communication skills and telephone techniques. I am _____ and I always keep a _____ attitude and have the ability to _____ new things very quickly. In what concerns to productivity, I consider myself as a/an _____ worker to lead a work team. I am able to _____ my knowledge on techniques and production strategies with _____. I enjoy learning from my partners too. In short, I always _____ my goals.



- *There is nothing noble about being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self.* Hindu Proverb
- *There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.* Aldous Huxley
- *Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are.* Malcolm S. Forbes
- *Trust yourself. Then you will know how to live.* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Dear students,

Your willingness to cooperate with my project is highly appreciated.
Many blessings and a successful future to you all!

Sincerely,
Clara

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